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JOHN WHITTOKESMEDE AS PARLIAMENTARIAN
AND HORSE OWNER IN YALE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY, BEINECKE MS 163¹

Abstract

This paper presents prolegomena to a study of Yale University Library, Beinecke MS 163, looking at some selected details of its origins, content and language. It illustrates how research in one area of a discipline can lead to fresh insights into a range of other areas. In this case, work done for the primary purpose of dialectology has necessitated exploration into the life and concerns of a medieval gentleman and his household, and has led to the discovery of a number of words and usages hitherto unrecorded in the historical dictionaries. **Keywords:** Whittoksmead, Beinecke MS 163, Wagstaff Miscellany, 15th century, Parliament, Horse, Medicine, Lexicography, Dialectology, *LALME*.

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece unos prolegómenos a un estudio de Yale University Library, Beinecke MS 163, atendiendo a algunos detalles sobre sus orígenes, contenidos y lengua. Ilustra cómo la investigación en un área de una disciplina puede provocar nuevas visiones en un grupo de áreas distintas. En este caso, un trabajo primariamente dialectológico requirió explorar la vida y preocupaciones de un caballero medieval y su casa, lo que llevó al descubrimiento de un número de palabras y usos aún no recogidos en los diccionarios históricos. **Palabras clave:** Whittoksmead, Beinecke MS 163, 'Wagstaff Miscellany', Siglo xv, Parlamento, Caballo, Medicina, Lexicografía, Dialectología, *LALME*.

1 BACKGROUND

When Michael Benskin, Keith Williamson and I began work on the revised electronic version of *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediæval English* (*LALME*) in the late summer of 2007, one of the appointed tasks was to identify Linguistic Profiles (LPs) that were

¹ A version of this paper was first presented at the 23th SELIM conference, University of Huelva (Spain), 29 Sept–1 Oct, 2011 under the title: 'From the horse's mouth: some 15th-century words you would rather not know'. Much of the early work was done as part of the preparation of *e-LALME*, which was funded by a Resource Enhancement grant from The Arts and Humanities Research Council, and by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, for which gratitude is here expressed. I thank also Rhona Alcorn, Philip Bennett and Roger Lass for comment on drafts. I am hugely indebted to Mary Laing for constant support during the work on this paper, and for the enthusiastic tracking down of historical references. I thank Christopher Thompson for insights on equine matters. As my ignorance of horse anatomy and physiology is profound, I am fortunate to have had veterinary advice on the horse medicine text from Malcolm Morley. For some of the more obscure equine conditions he suggested plausible modern equivalents. He also saved me from a number of mistakes and infelicities. Any remaining errors are of course my own.

in need of further investigation. Among the criteria for revision was when an LP included the work of more than one scribe and/or if its analysis had been exploratory and therefore incomplete. One LP that fell into this category had the following entry:

Yale University Library (New Haven, Conn.), Wagstaff 9 (*olim* Petworth 8). Four hands in similar language. ff. 186. See HMC 5, *Sixth Report* (C.1745 of 1877 and C.2102 of 1878, repr. 1893), Appendix, p. 289 (Lord Leconfield). Where forms for an item vary between the four hands, the different entries are marked 1, 2, 3 or 4 accordingly. LP 5291. Grid 387 163. Wilts.

That was all the information given, but it was clear on examination of the composite LP that the language of the ‘four hands’ showed extensive variation and that their stints ought to be identified and separated. There is a microfilm of the manuscript in the Edinburgh University Library and, in February 2010, I began the task of reanalysis. An early difficulty was resolved when I tracked down the fact that Wagstaff 9 (commonly known now as ‘The Wagstaff Miscellany’) has been recatalogued in the Yale University’s Beinecke Library as MS 163 (hereafter MS B). (It has there lost any mention of Wagstaff 9 and of the earlier Petworth 8 designation.)²

1.1 MS B: Content

The MS is large, consisting of 186 folios dated to the mid-15th century bound in with a final quire from perhaps a century earlier. The 15th-century part is a compilation in Latin and English of recipes (including those for improving the quality of spoiled wine), herbals, the care of horses and hawks, the tract on hunting known as *Master of the Game*, medica and other scientific texts. It also includes a Latin copy of *The Seven Sages of Rome*, four monitory verses, three parliamentary texts, a Confessional and two hymns.³

² Digital images of the whole manuscript (except fol. 31r, which has been omitted) are now available online at <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/digitallibrary>, under ‘Wagstaff Miscellany’.

³ For the content of the manuscript see Keiser (1998 and 1999) and for a recent contribution see Griffin (2007).

1.2 MS B: Hands

Very full descriptions of the manuscript appear both in the 1877 Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) report mentioned in *LALME* and in the Beinecke catalogue entry by Barbara Shailer (1984). In HMC it is said to be in ‘various hands’, while Shailer says that the larger, 15th-century part is ‘by 2 main scribes with abundant notes and texts added in margins and blank spaces by other hands’. In this 15th-century part, I have identified at least 12 different hands that provide English text. All but one of these scribes, however, write very little, either in Latin or English; some of them are probably later hands (from the late 15th or even early 16th century) that have made subsequent additions in small spaces. *Pace* Shailer, there is a single predominant main scribe (in the revised *e-LALME* designated Hand A), who writes: fols. 1r–14v (top half); 15r–16v; 20v (bottom half); 22r–23v; 24r–49v (top); 50r–55v (top); 56r–76v; 78v–101v (top); 103r–126v (all but last 3 lines); 134v–178v; 185r–186r. Most of these stints are in English.⁴ As has been pointed out in both the HMC and Shailer accounts, this hand is associated with three examples, written in red, of the name ‘Whittokesmede’. The name appears as ‘Whittokysmede’ in large red display script after *Explicits* in the main hand on f. 14v (though there the name is partially erased) and f. 101v. On f. 59r ‘Whittokesmede’ is written in the bottom margin of a text, in the same main hand, now designated *An Ordinance of Pottage* (see further Hicatt, 1988). In this case, the name (though more carefully formed) is in the same hand as the text and could plausibly be a signature.⁵ The hand varies somewhat in neatness at different stages in the manuscript, but is always very fluent and cursive, and is throughout easily readable. It is an Anglicana, legal hand of the kind found predominantly in the second and third quarters of the 15th century. It is upright in aspect, lacking both the thickened diagonal lines of long ‘s’ and ‘f’, and the spikiness associated with contemporary Secretary scripts. The letter-shapes are consistently Anglicana, with two-

⁴ Viz 15r (top) 15v; 22r–23r line 3, 31v (foot), 48v–55v (top) 56r–76v, 78v–99r, 101r–v 103r–126v, 134v–178v, 185r–186r.

⁵ It is here assumed that the name is the personal name based on the place-name Whiteoxmead (see §2 below) rather than the place-name itself. The content of the texts with which it is associated have nothing to do with localities.

compartment ‘a’ and ‘g’, long ‘r’, sigma-shaped short ‘s’, and ‘curly’ ‘w’; though in some of the texts copied late in the manuscript, the simpler Secretary-style ‘w’ is occasionally employed.

1.3 *MS B: Dating*

No dates are attached to any of the texts in the manuscript, but Shailer’s ‘s. xv med’ is reasonable from the palaeographic evidence. The presence of otiose downward strokes on final ‘d’s and ‘g’s, and of backward hooks with overwritten off-strokes on final nasal consonants would be unusual in the first quarter of the 15th century. By the last quarter one might expect to see more Secretary letter-shapes infiltrating the script, and by the last two decades of the century perhaps also some aspects of humanistic writing style beginning to show. Having said that, a later 15th-century date cannot be ruled out absolutely on palaeographical grounds. The age of the writer, where and how and by whom he was taught, and the conservatism or innovation of either teacher or learner will always be uncertain variables.

2 THE WHITTOKESMEDE⁶ CONNECTION

Neither the HMC report nor Shailer (1984) identifies Whittokesmede, but more recently it has been assumed by both Shailer (1991: 100) and Keiser (1998: 3596 and 1999: 474) that the owner of the signature and the compiler of the manuscript was John Whittokesmede. Neither gives a source for this identification, but it may be assumed that they both gleaned their information about Whittokesmede from the entry in Wedgewood & Holt’s (1936: 944–945) *Biographies of the Members of the Commons House 1439–1509*. This gives Whittokesmede’s dates as 1410–1482, and both Shailer and Keiser cite them thus. Following the information in Wedgewood & Holt, Keiser (1999: 474) describes Whittokesmede as: ‘A prominent member of the West Country gentry’, who ‘sat in parliament numerous times between 1442 and 1475’ and who ‘frequently served on royal commissions’. Keiser states that Whittokesmede put together his

⁶ The name may be spelled *Whittokesmede*, *Whittokysmede*, *Whuttokesmede*, *Whitoxmede*, or (as in most of the secondary sources) modernised to *Whittocksmead*. I here adopt one of the forms found in MS B, as also used in Driver (1999).

compilation, ‘during the third quarter of the fifteenth century’.⁷ At the time of his publications, Keiser did not have access to the much more detailed work on Whittokesmede by Driver (1999), although Driver himself did not apparently know of the probable connection of Whittokesmede with MS B. However, his superbly detailed article, with the intriguing title ‘The Career of John Whittokesmede, a Fifteenth Century Wiltshire Lawyer and Parliamentary “Carpet-Bagger”’ is richly referenced from the Calendars of Fine Rolls, Close Rolls and Parliamentary papers in the Public Record Office as well as to the valuable works of McKisack (1932) and Wedgewood and Holt (1936). Driver confirms that Whittokesmede was of Beanacre (near Melksham), Wilts (with other property also in Salisbury) and that he was a 15th-century lawyer and parliamentarian, whose varied and astoundingly busy career spanned 60 years and saw him elected to parliament for Bath in Somerset and places in Wiltshire no less than twelve times. The family had previously owned land in Whiteoxmead, nr. Wellow in Somerset. Whittokesmede’s father and grandfather, both also John, served as MPs for Bath on several occasions between 1360 and 1410.

This third John Whittokesmede is obviously the same man as that assumed by Shailer and Keiser to be the compiler of MS B. Interestingly, Michael Samuels’ localisation of his composite LP from the manuscript is in Wiltshire, within a mile or two of Beanacre and Melksham. This might suggest that Michael knew of the Whittokesmede connection long before the publication of *LALME* and before either Keiser or Driver wrote their pieces.⁸ His localisation of the language of the manuscript near Melksham could, however, have been a coincidence. Dialectally, Wiltshire Middle English belongs neither with the true South West, nor fully with the South-West Midlands. It is a southern language type, and

⁷ I assume that this statement is made on palaeographical grounds. It sits oddly with the dating c.1450 that Keiser (1998) gives to the manuscript in all but one of his citations of it when he lists the manuscripts that contain individual texts, viz Keiser (1988: nos [236], [398], [402], [451], [462]). In text no. [439] only, Keiser gives the date of Beinecke as ca. 1475. Since there is no reason to suppose this text, *Medicines for Horses*, was copied later than any of the other texts, I take this to be a mistake.

⁸ I did write to Michael to ask about this in the summer of 2010, but he was by then no longer active and, for the first time in long years of correspondence with him, I received no reply. Michael died in November 2010 aged 90.

by the mid-15th century has much in common with London language and the emerging standard. The language of the main hand of MS B is no exception, but a number of non-standardised details match those of other texts localised in Wiltshire. The original placing could therefore have been by linguistic ‘fit’ rather than via extralinguistic association. We certainly see no linguistic reason for the much-expanded LP of the work of the main hand to be relocated.⁹ Neither Shailer nor Keiser mention the placing in *LALME* of the language of some of the texts in the manuscript they describe. The fact that it was referred to in *LALME* as ‘Wagstaff 9’ rather than Beinecke 163 perhaps might explain this omission; but it is clear that the linguistic evidence gives some support to the identification of the compiler of the manuscript as the lawyer and parliamentarian, John Whittokesmede III.

Appendix 1 shows a time-line of the career of John Whittokesmede III (hereafter JW), drawn from information in Driver (1999) and the other references cited. Entries concerning his parliamentary career are emboldened. His career had its course during a turbulent time (the so-called Wars of the Roses) when the Lancastrian and Yorkist parties jockeyed for influence. The last of the three Lancastrian kings, Henry VI, reigned from 31 August 1422 to 4 March 1461 and then again briefly between 30 October 1470 and 11 April 1471. The Yorkist king Edward IV reigned from 4 March 1461 to 30 October 1470 and then from 11 April 1471 to 9 April 1483. The Whittokesmedes and their neighbours were of the Lancastrian party.

It is clear from the summary in Appendix 1 that John Whittokesmede was considered a trustworthy and highly competent lawyer and judge.

⁹ In *e-LALME* it is LP 5291, now separated from the contributions by other hands. The work of one other contemporary hand that shares the copying of some texts with Hand A (Hand F) is not strongly Wiltshire in character, but it does have some interesting forms. It is now designated LP 5293 (not on the maps). The language of another contemporary scribe (who finishes the *Poem on Hawking* begun by the main scribe) is NE Midland in character, presumably reflecting the language of the exemplar; cf. Danielson (1970). The language of hand J (LP 5295) is similar to that of the main hand, and is localised with it. The language of Scribe D, who provides a small number of medical recipes scattered in the manuscript, is strongly south-western, possibly from Devon. The work of the other hands is colourless and/or lacks enough forms showing regional distinctiveness for localisation to be possible.

Despite being a Lancastrian supporter, he was appointed to royal commissions not only by the Lancastrian Henry VI but also by the Yorkist Edward IV. His appointment by Edward in 1465 to report on the lands of the attainted Lancastrian James Butler suggests that his diplomatic skills were also well regarded. It seems likely that he would have been considered by both court and parliamentary authorities as ‘a safe pair of hands’.

3 THE PARLIAMENTARY TEXTS¹⁰

It seems a reasonable assumption that JW is the most likely candidate for the compilation of MS B. The main scribe is therefore likely to have been either JW himself, or a trusted secretary or other amanuensis, working regularly and closely with him, and attaching his name to certain texts. It seems reasonable to conjecture, however, that JW was in fact doing his own writing. The close involvement of JW himself gains support from the presence of the three parliamentary texts (two in Latin and one in English) that are found on fols. 16r–23r. The first, entitled *De Modo parlamenti* (*On the manner of parliament*) runs from fol. 16r to 20v ending *Explicit modus parlamenti*, about two thirds of the way down the page. It is immediately followed by a text entitled *Hic Annotatus quis sit Senescallus Anglie & quid~ eius Officium* (Here is noted who may be Steward of England and what his office is). This text runs from fol. 20v to half way down fol. 22r. The much-copied text, *De Modo parlamenti*, is edited by Pronay and Taylor (1980). The text was composed in the 1320s during the second half of the reign of Edward II and survives in two recensions: Recension A in eleven manuscripts (including Beinecke) and Recension B in eight. Pronay and Taylor (1980: 18) say that the A version ‘would have been part of the “working libraries” of lawyers’. The text is often associated with the Tract on the Steward (Pronay and Taylor 1980: 27 fn. 54). So far then, it is not surprising that JW, a very busy practising

¹⁰ All transcriptions from MS B that follow are my own, made from microfilm or digital images. Capitalisation, underlining and superscript letters are given as in the manuscript. Otiose final flourishes are realised with ~. Expansions of manuscript abbreviations are italicised when the transcription is in roman and given in roman when shorter manuscript citations are italicised. Line ends are shown as \.

lawyer and a strong parliamentarian, should have copies of these two texts. As Pronay and Taylor (1980: 18–19) put it:

These collections of legal materials may be further distinguished as Part I and Part II volumes. A Part I volume, or collection of *Vetera Statuta*, contained treatises and statutes up to the end of Edward II's reign. A Part II volume, or collection of *Nova Statuta*, contained legislation from the beginning of Edward III's reign up to the date of the purchase of the volume. Occasionally a single volume might contain the items both of Part I and Part II. None the less of whatever kind they were, all such volumes formed a part or the whole of the 'working libraries' of lawyers during the later Middle Ages. We should note that the *Modus* is found in every kind of collection of this type.

What is perhaps odd is that the texts appear in JW's large household compilation. They would almost certainly have been owned by him in other copies, as part of the collection of purely legal materials that he must have had as his working lawyer's library. It is true that, among the recipes, medica and husbandry texts that would have been essential for the running of a large country household, appear other kinds of text (already mentioned) as well as some verses on the Exchequer on fols. 30r–31v. But why should JW want to include extra copies of these two parliamentary legal texts in his household compilation? One possible answer may lie in the uniquely surviving copy of the third part of the parliamentary collection in MS B.

3.1 *The Speaker text*

This is a text in English of what appears to be the actual words of the speech of protestation to the King of a particular Speaker of a particular parliament. The first speaker to have attempted to 'protest' and excuse himself from taking office is recorded as being Sir John Guildesborough in 1381 (Laundy 1964: 140):

In all probability he anticipated a dispute between the King and the Commons which could result in embarrassment for himself. Little could he have known that in expressing his own genuine reluctance to serve as Speaker he was founding a tradition which was to endure for centuries, long after it had become completely meaningless.

The MS B Speaker text belongs in this long tradition of protestation after election. We know about it from medieval times from the Latin

records of parliamentary proceedings in the Rolls of Parliament that refer to the *protestatio* or *excusatio* of the Speaker. The tradition developed over succeeding decades into a formulaic expression of unworthiness and came to include the subsequent claiming of parliamentary privileges from the monarch by the Speaker after the monarch's stylised overruling of the protestation. The text in MS B seems to be a unique survivor of the actual spoken English versions of speeches that are otherwise not known except from the much briefer Latin summaries enrolled in the Parliament Rolls.

MS B's text is entitled *Prelocutio ad Regem in parlamento*. The English that follows refers to the summoning of the parliament to meet on 'fryday last passyd~' and the request of the King relayed by 'the full \ reuerent fadyre in god the archibisshopp~ of Caunterbery 3oure Chaunceller' that the commons should 'go vn-to the house accustomyd~ and there \ to chese a spekere of one of them'. Then comes the protestation that the chosen Speaker is inadequate to the task ('consydere my symplenesse and \ myne vnkunynyng~ hauyng~ none eloquens') and that he requests the King to command the commons to call a re-election ('renovel ther election') so that someone more suitable ('the wyche \ is connyng and in eloquens habill') may be chosen. There follows in Latin a summary record that the Chancellor, by the King's mandate, says that the King wishes the election to stand: ¶ Responsio Cancellari per mandatum Regis Rex \ vult habere te in prolocutorem sciens te habilis ('Reply of the Chancellor by mandate of the King: the King wishes to have thee as Speaker knowing thee to be fit'). Then, again in English, the text continues with the Speaker asking that the usual privileges ('pryuelegiez libertes ymyunytes and fraunchise3') be granted to him and his masters and fellows and that his protest 'may be entryd~ and enactyd~ in this 3oure hye court \ of parlement'. Finally, in Latin, is the summary record of the King's reply via the Chancellor: ¶ Cancellarius per mandatum Regis respondit \ quod protestacio illa irrotulari debet in par\liamento ['o'corr from 'um'] autoritate parlamenti cum &c \ sicut fuit tempore suo & temporibus progenitorum &c \ modo ampliori &c ('The Chancellor by the mandate of the King replies that the protestation is to be enrolled in the parliament (roll) by the authority of parliament with etc. as it was in his own time and in the times of his progenitors etc. in more full manner etc.).

From the perspective of JW's association with the content, there are a number of points of interest about the MS B Speaker text:

- (a) in MS B, the text follows straight on from the copies of *De Modo parlamenti* and the Tract on the Steward. The mode of copying of all three texts makes it highly likely that all the texts were copied at the same time;
- (b) it is not a text that would be part of the normal legal library, but one that might be of interest to (i) a parliamentarian with connections to (or indeed pretensions to) the Speakership and/or (ii) a lawyer employed to produce such paperwork for parliamentary use;
- (c) it refers to a particular parliament, one that began on a Friday at a time when the Archbishop of Canterbury was Chancellor;
- (d) the Latin summaries also appear to be unique. They are in the present not the past tense, so would seem to reflect (or at least refer to) actual speech. The first summary has no equivalent in the 15th-century Parliament Rolls, the import of its content normally being subsumed into an abridged description. The second does not in detail follow the pattern of the wording normally used in the enrolled summary.

I will deal with point (a) first. *De Modo parlamenti* is begun by the main scribe, whom we will provisionally suppose to be JW himself. This scribe continues to the end of fol. 16v. Then another scribe takes up the work at the top of fol. 17r and continues to half way down fol. 20v. Thereafter JW resumes, finishing *De Modo parlamenti* and beginning the tract on the Steward as far as the foot of the folio. The other scribe resumes on fol. 21r, finishing the Tract on the Steward partway down fol. 22r. Then JW begins afresh with the new rubricated title of the Speaker text, and writes all the English text and the Latin summary replies, finishing the text near the top of fol. 23r.¹¹ It looks as though JW was initiating and supervising the copying of the first two texts, in close collaboration with

¹¹ This is a short folio and the Speaker text is immediately followed by a recipe in a much more cursive and perhaps slightly later hand: A Meddyson~ For a wonde þ^t suellyth or þ^t ys Fusterd~.

a secretary or other trusted member of staff, also literate in Latin.¹² It is perhaps reasonable to conjecture that JW decided to make new copies of the texts he already had, and to associate them in one place with the third important parliamentary text (copied entirely by himself), at the time when the newer text came into his hands.

3.2 Which parliament?

To which parliament does the Speaker text refer? Point (c) then becomes intriguingly important to our hypotheses that the main scribe could be JW himself, and that he and his colleague made the copies of the parliamentary texts for the household compilation at around the time (or not long after) the parliament to which the Speaker text belongs. If we are correct in our suppositions, the parliament in question would have to fall within the period that JW was active. Pronay and Taylor (1980: 197–201) edit the unique Speaker text as an addendum to their edition of *De Modo parliamenti*. They refer to the Speaker text as a ‘draft’. As it is fluently written, with only two small erasures, and is not loose-leaf but continues straight on from other fair copies of well known texts, it can hardly be a first or rough draft. I take them to mean therefore that it represents a copy of a version prepared in advance, rather than a report of the speeches after the event. Given the present-tense wording of the Latin summaries of the Chancellor’s replies (point (c) above), I think it highly likely that it does indeed represent the text of the pre-prepared speech.

Unfortunately, Pronay and Taylor did not identify JW, so they had no reason to attach the Speaker text to any particular parliamentarian. Without the benefit of any of the subsequent research, they allowed themselves a very broad time window, from the end of the 14th century to the middle of the 16th century, in their attempt to track down the parliament in question. They found four parliaments that began on a Friday at a period when the Archbishop of Canterbury was Chancellor: 3 February 1413, 10 February 1447, 19 November 1487 and 25 January 1504.¹³

¹² This other scribe’s hand (*e-LALME* Hand F) only appears once elsewhere in the manuscript, also in close collaboration with JW. On fols. 76v–78r, he copies the first part of the text on the *The Vertues off Herbes* before JW takes over from him.

¹³ Cross-checking with BHOPR and Cheney & Jones (2000) confirms that these are the only parliaments that combine the required conditions.

They themselves discount the 1413 parliament on the grounds that at this date, it was usually the King in person, not via the Chancellor, who made the replies to the Speaker. In fact, although this parliament was summoned and the members arrived on the appointed date, King Henry V was too ill to attend; so it was never opened and the members simply went back home. This would not preclude the advance preparation of a speech for the Speaker, but the function of the Chancellor in the Speaker text does seem to render it less likely that this was the parliament involved. Pronay and Taylor discount the 1447 parliament because it met in Bury St Edmunds and the Speaker text twice makes mention of ‘the house accustimyð’, which they take to refer to Westminster. It seems to me, however, that the phraseology of the text is based on what are likely to be well-used legal formulae adapted from Latin; ‘the house accustimyð’ is based on ‘[in] domo sua communi et consueta’. I shall return to this matter below. They also dismiss the 1487 parliament because the text refers to ‘the 3eris of 3oure blessyd- regne’ and they consider that this suggests a longer reign than the two years that Henry VII had by then been on the throne. They therefore conclude that the text refers to the parliament of 1504. The dismissal of the 1487 parliament on these grounds is shaky, as the phraseology is again likely to be traditional. More importantly, the script of the Speaker text belongs to the mid-15th century and has strong associations with a man we know died in 1482/3. In these circumstances, neither the 1487 nor the 1504 parliament would appear to be contenders.

The only parliament that falls within the period of JW’s active career, and fits the palaeographical and extra-linguistic evidence, is that held in 1447, when John Stafford was both Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor. At that parliament, William Tresham of Northamptonshire was chosen as Speaker (Laundy 1964: 451). It is one of the few parliaments during this period for which JW was not returned as a member. This parliament is of enormous interest to historians, because it was called at a time when King Henry VI suspected the Duke of Gloucester of designs against his life. It was also a period when the king was treating for peace with France and about to surrender Maine to the French crown, which was not a popular decision. According to the account in BHOPR (1447):

At three weeks, the parliament of 1447, held at Bury St Edmunds, is the shortest of the reign. Its roll of six membranes is also the shortest.

Chronicles display considerable interest in the parliament because it saw a momentous political event—the arrest (on 18 February) and the death (on 23 February) of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester. ... writs had been issued on 14 December [1446] for parliament to meet on 10 February 1447 at Cambridge. ... On 20 January new writs were issued changing the intended location ‘for certain reasons now moving us’ to Bury St Edmunds, but keeping the opening date as 10 February. But this may not have been the first choice. A royal signet letter written to the chancellor on 24 January notes that the king had previously written indicating his intention that the parliament should be held at Winchester, given that plague was present in Cambridge, but that now ‘for certain causes that have been declared to us since that time’ the king had decided that the parliament should be held in Bury St Edmunds, and that all who needed to know should be informed of this ‘in all possible haste’. Would that we could know what those ‘certain causes’ were and whether they included the issue of Duke Humphrey. It is indeed tempting to link the choice of venues away from London to an attack on Gloucester. The duke had always been popular in the capital, so it would be wise to hold parliament in an area where a move against him would not generate local discontent.

The parliament did duly meet in the refectory of the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds. BHOPR (1447) continues:

The speaker was elected on the following day, Saturday 11 February, and presented on Monday 13 February. The man chosen was William Tresham who, like William Burley in the previous parliament, had served as an MP in most of the parliaments of the reign to date. He had been speaker on two previous occasions, 1439–40 and 1442.

A parliamentary lawyer drawing up papers for a normal parliament at this period would have been likely to have adapted some generally accepted template, filling in the correct day (in this case Friday) and the correct designation of the Chancellor at the time (in this case the Archbishop of Canterbury). But he would presumably have kept other forms, such as ‘the house accustomed’, which would not normally appear as ‘blanks’ in the template. In the enrolled summary made after the event, the 1447 roll in fact refers to the king ordering the commons to assemble the following day (Saturday) for the Speaker’s election *in quadam domo eis assignanda* (‘in a certain chamber to be assigned to them’). Presumably these were the actual words used by the King in the unusual circumstances. But even given the prior uncertainty about the location of the 1447 parliament, it is

hard to know what new formula a drafting lawyer would have been able to substitute for the normal 'house accustomed' when drawing up the text of the Speaker's protestation before the event. I do not therefore consider that use of the 'house accustomed' formula disqualifies the Speaker text in MS B from referring to the 1447 parliament.¹⁴

¹⁴ If the MS B Speaker text does not refer to the 1447 parliament, then the 1487 (or even the 1504) parliament would have to be considered. We would then have to assume that the main hand of the manuscript belonged not to John Whittokesmede III but to a Whittokesmede of the next generation (or his amanuensis), and one with some personal, professional or historical interest in parliamentary texts. This must remain a possibility. There is some difference of opinion about the Whittokesmede family tree—possibly because of there being several generations with the first name John. Driver (1999: 97) gives JW III's wife as Agnes and his daughter as Elizabeth. Yet he cites as source Wedgewood & Holt (1936: 944–945) where JW III's wife is given as Blanche, sister of John ap Harry of Preston Wynne, Herefords. In Wedgewood and Holt also appears the intriguing footnote: '*Geneal.* NS vi. 199 Mr Storey Maskelyne writes:- Twyneho, a small hamlet adjoining Whittocksmead, is in the parish of Wellow by Bath. The arms assigned to Twyneho are identical with the arms quartered by the Gore family for Whittocksmead:- viz. Silver, and a chevron between three lapwings sable. Giles Gore is said to have married Elizabeth, da. and h. of John Whittocksmead. But Whittocksmeads continued at Beanacre [sic]'. There is no mention of sons, but the Whittokesmedes continuing at Beanacre were presumably of the next generation, whether the families of sons, nephews or cousins. To complicate matters further, Keiser (1999: 483) states 'a clerical education or training in the law was the means for gentry sons to attain social advancement for themselves and their families. That was clear to John Whittocksmead, for one of his sons was an attorney and another, apparently, a cleric.' Alas, Keiser gives no evidence, source or reference for this remark. Keiser (1999: 474) refers to JW only as 'a prominent member of the West Country gentry', and as an MP. He does not refer to him as a practising attorney. Since JW III was par excellence a busy and fully practising attorney 'of the quorum' (and himself son of another John), it is perhaps possible that this further attorney son referred to by Keiser is a chimera. There was a younger John Whittokesmede, who was indeed a clergyman. He appears in Emden (1959: 2041) as having been ordained as an acolyte to the title of Oseney Abbey, Oxford 18 April 1479, and priest to the same title 25 February 1480. He subsequently became Rector of Heathfield, Somerset, 2 November 1480. Perhaps this is the cleric to which Keiser refers. However, since he is recorded in Emden as being from Wells, Somerset, he was presumably either from another branch of the Whittoksmedes who had remained in Somerset, or from another family altogether. One owner of Beanacre Manor after JW was a Henry Whitoxmede (so spelled) to whom reference is made in VCH 7's section on Melksham (1953: 91–121). In a conveyance of land in Melksham in the early 15th century (no date supplied) he is referred to as being 'of Beanacre' and 'sometime bailiff of Trowbridge' (a town three miles south-west of

If we accept that it is in JW's hand (or at least the hand of someone close to him and writing in his name elsewhere in the manuscript), the Speaker text would seem most likely to have been a copy of a version that was drawn up, either by JW himself, or by a legal or parliamentary colleague from whom he obtained a copy. In spite of the fact that JW was not himself returned as an MP for the 1447 parliament, as a prominent, trusted and experienced lawyer he could potentially have been employed on drawing up parliamentary papers for it. If the drafter was not JW but someone known to him, the copy could perhaps have come into JW's hands when he became a Serjeant-at-arms the following year. The Serjeants-at-arms were appointed to attend upon the House of Commons and the Speaker. In any case, the text would probably have been copied into MS B soon after 1447, perhaps for use as a template in the future.¹⁵ Given that the speech of protestation would have been made at each new parliament, it is interesting to speculate as to why JW did not make it his business to obtain a copy sooner. One possibility is that he had begun to imagine himself as a potential future Speaker himself around the time he obtained the copy.¹⁶ It is a matter of record (a) that at this period the

Melksham). Henry died in 1526. Given the succession of ownership, it does seem likely that he was a relative of JW; but judging by the dates, it is probable that there would have been another Whittokesmede of Beanacre between JW and Henry. William, son and heir of Henry, died in 1539 leaving two daughters. It seems, then, that any Whittokesmede male line had probably died out by the mid 16th century. Bindoff (1982: 12) records that William Daniell (ca.1531–1604), of St. Margaret's Marlborough, Wiltshire married (as his second wife and by 1558) Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of William Whittocksmead of Beanacre and that they had two sons. William Daniell 'strengthened his local ties by marriage, first to the daughter of a leading townsman, then to an heiress who brought him the manor of Beanacre'. The property remained in the Daniell family until 1719 (VCH 7). The Old Manor of Beanacre itself is still standing. There is a full description of its architectural history in the 4 December 1937 issue of *Country Life*, where an article by Arthur Oswald says that it began in the late 14th century (c.1360) as a hall and solar, to which additions were made in the 15th century. About 1500 (so after the death of JW) a chapel was added, and during the early 16th century the house was extensively remodelled. Further additions were made up to the early 18th century. The property was renovated in 1931 by Harold Brakspear.

¹⁵ If this hypothesis is accepted, it provides support for the ca. 1450 dating of MS B.

¹⁶ I owe this suggestion to Rhona Alcorn.

Speakership was restricted to those MPs who were elected as knights of the shire,¹⁷ and (b) that JW was elected knight of the shire for Wiltshire (for the first and probably only time) in 1450. In that parliament, Sir William Oldhall of Herefordshire was elected Speaker.¹⁸

4 *MEDICINES FOR HORSES*

Many of the medical, herbal, astronomical, cookery, hunting and hawking texts appearing in the Beinecke compilation are to be found also in similar books contemporary with it or not much later. Keiser (1999: 473) considers that these fifteenth-century 'practical books for gentlemen' are in the same tradition as the Anglo-French treatises on estate management preserved in manuscripts of the late thirteenth and the fourteenth century. He takes the vernacular text on equine medicine as an example of the kinds of works that were popular candidates for inclusion in these household books, and looks in some detail at eight of the miscellanies into which it was copied. Keiser's discussion of the text's popularity and later transmission into print does not, however, go into details of its content or vocabulary.

In MS B, the text appears on fols. 50r–55r, following (on fols. 32r–49v) a copy, also in the hand we are assuming to be JW's, of the Latin equine text: *Marescalcia equorum*, by Jordanus Rufus de Calabria, 'a thirteenth-century treatise composed at the imperial court of Frederick II' (Keiser 1999: 475).¹⁹ Although there is, not surprisingly, some overlap

¹⁷ See Laundy (1964: 148): 'He [the Speaker] was always a knight of the shire, for the Commons required their Speaker to be of a standing to which no burgess could in those days hope to attain. It was not until 1533 that a borough Member was first called to the Chair'.

¹⁸ There is no reason to suppose that JW himself was ever Speaker. The Speakers for almost all the parliaments while he was active are known. In spite of his undoubted experience and reputation as a lawyer, he was only once elected as knight of the shire (rather than the burgess of a town), which (as we have seen) would have been a necessary qualification for election as Speaker. The only parliament during his period for which the Speaker is unknown is that of 1470, when the Duke of Warwick brought Henry VI out of captivity and put him briefly back on the throne. The parliamentary papers for this parliament are lost. It is tempting to conjecture that JW, as a staunch Lancastrian and experienced parliamentarian, might have been in contention for the Speakership, but it can remain no more than an intriguing 'long shot'.

¹⁹ It is not noticed in the Beinecke catalogue, but there seems to be a lacuna in the text of the *Marescalcia equorum*, between fols. 32v and 33r.

in the equine maladies dealt with in both texts, there seems to be no direct connection between them, either in content or in the remedies detailed. Unlike the vernacular text, the *Marescalcia* deals with a number of conditions of the equine gastro-intestinal and urinary systems as well as the external hurts and conditions that are mostly the subject matter of the vernacular text. The *Marescalcia* is also much fuller, more detailed and rigorous in its approach. As Brigitte Prevot (1992: 454–55) puts it: ‘On voit donc clairement ici que Rufus procède, dès le XIII^e siècle, d’une manière qu’on peut appeler scientifique’. Rufus goes from the observation of the malady to an enquiry of its cause and its effects, from which he then deduces a cure. Prevot points out that ‘Les textes du XIV^e et même du XV^e siècle souvent beaucoup moins rigoureux’. In the case of the 15th-century vernacular text in Beinecke, it is perhaps not so much a matter of being less rigorous, but more a matter of scale and practicality. The vernacular text names the disease, briefly defines or describes it and then proceeds to the remedy.

The vernacular text in MS B has no overall title, but the first section is called *For to know how þ^t a colt schalle preve in wexyng* and the last is *For the mornyng of the chine*. The text has not so far been edited from this manuscript. Keiser (1998: [439]) has identified ten other manuscript versions of the text, which he refers to there as *Medicines for Horses*. All but one he dates later than MS B.²⁰ The only other manuscript text to which he assigns the date ca. 1450 is that owned by the Duke of Gloucester. The others all seem to be late 15th-century or early 16th-century copies. Keiser also lists a number of early printed editions, the earliest being 1502 by Wynkyn de Worde, entitled *Here begynneth the proprieties and medycynes for hors* (hereafter W).²¹

One version of the text has been edited: an imperfect copy in Cambridge University Library, Ll.I.18, fols. 65v–72r (Braekman 1986:

²⁰ Oddly, in his entry for this text he gives MS B’s date as ca. 1475, but since in all other citations of it he has it as ca. 1450 I take 1475 to be in error (cf. fn. 7 above).

²¹ Accessed from EEBO. Unlike the version in MS B, the 1502 print begins with a table of contents. It also includes some materials at the beginning and at the end, that do not appear in MS B and some of the material that is shared is ordered differently. For the history of the progression of the text from manuscript to print see further Keiser (1995), which, however, I have not seen.

73–85). A considerable portion of the text in this version (hereafter MS C) is missing at the beginning and end. The first complete section in MS C is *For to make An hors to follow his mayster*. The last intact section is *For the perle in the eye*. The hand is a very cursive Secretary and looks to be late 15th century.²² It is certainly not earlier than the MS B version and probably somewhat later. In the same manuscript and in the same hand are copies of letters from Edward IV to the University of Cambridge. Since Edward was king 1461–1483, the copies of the letters cannot be earlier than 1461 and are almost certainly later. The Catalogue entry indicates that watermark evidence would put the manuscript's compilation in the last quarter of the 15th century. The content of the manuscript links it with the Lancashire families of Booth and Worseley (see further Keiser 1999: 478–479). The language of MS C has not been utilised in *LALME*, perhaps because of its late date. The dialects of two of the hands identified have been labelled 'probably Notts' and those of three other hands are deemed 'N Midland language of one kind or another' (*LALME*, vol 1: 68).

Braekman's edition of the *Medicines for Horses* from MS C was utilised by MED (reference a1500 *Cmb.Diseases Horse* (Cmb Ll.1.18)). But MED appears not to have cited all the available vocabulary from the text. Much of the specialised vocabulary has not been recorded in the OED from before the 16th century, and a number of words and usages are hitherto unrecorded in either OED or MED. Braekman (1986) is a plain-text edition of a single imperfect copy, not entirely accurately transcribed. It would clearly be of great interest if a scholarly edition of the *Medicines for Horses* text, collating all the early versions, could be undertaken. Meantime, I will use the rest of this paper to give a preview of some of the fascinating, and sometimes perplexing, vocabulary found in the MS B version in particular, using the MS C version and the W print for comparison and illumination where necessary.

It is clear that all three versions go back at some stage to 'the same text', but none is without error and each has unique errors. MS B and MS C are for the most part closer to each other than either is to W, but occasionally MS C and W agree where MS B has a different reading. MS C's imperfect condition means that it lacks much of what is in MS B and

²² Digital images of the manuscript are available on: <http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts>.

in W, though it does have one text that does not appear in either: *For the mareffownde*.²³ The special interest of the vocabulary and linguistic forms in the MS B version is its early date (ca. 1450) and the fact that it is in mid 15th-century Wiltshire dialect.

4.1 *The content*

The vernacular equine text is not entirely to do with complaints and diseases, and it is possible it was put together originally from a number of different sources. Each text is quite short, sometimes only a few lines long and never longer than a page length. The first text, *For to knowe how þ^t a colt schalle preve in wexyng*, provides a measuring formula for finding out how big a new-born foal will be when it comes to full size. This is followed by a text entitled: *For to knowe a hors and for to knowe wyche \ properteys þ^t be best þ^t longeth to a hors old or yonge*. It details the various colours of horses' coats, put in order of preference, along with other desirable features. Then come five texts to do with training horses, in amongst which are three texts describing how dishonestly to improve a horse's appearance, presumably to help with its sale. After this, comes the main medical part of the text, which lists and describes thirty-seven varied equine ailments and their cures.

4.1.1 The coat-colour text

I give here the text in its entirety because it has a number of points of linguistic interest and difficulty for discussion of which the full context will be useful.²⁴

4.1.1.1 The Middle English text in MS B

For to knowe a hors and for to knowe wyche \ properteys þ^t be best þ^t longeth to a hors old or yonge \
The beste coloure of a hors is blak Bay with a gilde mouthe and a gilde Flank & so vnder \ the hors sydis vp to the navell & so þt his lippes be ful

²³ Misread in Braekman (1986) as *maressownde*. See OED s.v. *morfound* *n*. No citations before 1523. (MED only records the verb.) The problem is to do with the horse taking a chill.

²⁴ There is little or no punctuation in the manuscript text and I have not added any. For transcription conventions see fn. 10 above.

of revelis for þt is the signe \ that he hath a fers hert Nowe for to knowe of this hors see þt he haue a white \ sterre in the forhede or a white fether in the on the [sic] nose or a white fote be-hynde \ & see þt he haue a lytyll hede and leyn~ and grete yen~ short eris and opyn~ nosse\threllis brode forhede longe atte the reyn~ thyn~ mane brode brest and side browyd~ \ leyn~ kneys and grete senuys short pasteron~ and short bakk and side rybbid~ bigge \ in the rumpe smale stonys in the codde and þt he stonde vp ryght euery fote a-zenst \ other and þenne he is gode \

A sadde sorrell is best next \

¶ He is best next wyth a white mane and wyth a white taille and þt he be welle \ herid~ on the furthir eye and he be of the signe3 of the hors a-bove saide but se þt \ he haue a blak hoof~ and then he is gode \

Appulle grey is next best \

¶ He is best next if he haue a white mane and white taille and faire blakke \ dappell on the lemys and þt he haue a thyn~ nekke of here and a thyn~ taille and \ þt he haue on eyther side the nekke as hit were cronys þt twellis the here \ and thenne he is lyke a gode hors.

A Donne hors with a blakke liste is next \

¶ He is best next if he haue blak mane and a blak taille and rounde balokis \ and fewe heris in his mane and meny in his taille and se þt he haue the \ *propirte3* of the furst

A Mouse donne is best next \ [fol. 50v]

And he haue a mely mouthe and rowe coddys and þt he be of the feturys of the furst hors \

A blak hors is best next \

A blak hors is gode if he haue a white mark~ on the forhede oþer a white fethire on the nose oþer a white fote be-hynde on the furthire syde and then he is gode

A Colle blak hors is *parliouse* \

A cole blak hors is *parliouse* þt berith no white marke for and he continue longe with a man he wille droune hym or sle hym or do vn-to hym~ sum mysshief

A heyron Grey is nought \
he is nought in no laboryng in no wyse and þerfore trust hym~ neuer for
he may laboure \ no thyng~ as a oþer hors may

4.1.1.2 Translation (those terms left untranslated and in italic will be discussed in §4.1.4 below).

To know a horse and to know which properties are best that belong to a horse, old or young

The best colour of a horse is black bay with a golden mouth and golden flank and underside up to the navel; and see that his lips are full of wrinkles for that is the sign that he has a fierce heart. Now, to know of [the features of] this horse: see that he has a white star on the forehead or a white feather on the nose or a white hind foot. And see that he has a little, lean head, big eyes, short ears and open nostrils, broad forehead, *longe at the reyn*, thin mane, broad breast, *side-browyd~*, lean knees and large sinews, short pasterns and short back, *side-rybbid~*, big in the rump and with small stones in the cod, and that he stands upright with each foot [straight] against the other and then he is good.

A dark sorrel is next best. He is next best with a white mane and with a white tail and [see] that he is well-haired at the front of the eye [i.e. has good thick lashes], and has the same features as the horse above, but see that he has a black hoof and then he is good.

Appulle grey is next best. He is next best if he has a white mane and white tail and fair black *dappell* on the limbs. And [see] that he has a thin neck of hair and a thin tail and that he has on either side of the neck *as hit were cronys þ^t twellis the here*, and then he is likely to be a good horse.

A dun horse with a black stripe is next. He is next best if he has a black mane and a black tail and round bollocks and few hairs in his mane and many in his tail; and see that he has the properties of the first horse.

A mouse-dun is next best, if he has a *mely mouth* and rough cods and if he is of the features of the first horse.

A black horse is next best. A black horse is good if he has a white mark on the forehead or a white feather on the nose or a white foot behind on the off side.

A coal black horse is perilous. A coal black horse that carries no white marking is perilous, for if he continues long with a man he will drown him or slay him or do him some mischief.

A *heyron Grey* is worth nothing. He is worthless for any work at all and therefore never trust him because he cannot work as another horse may.

4.1.1.3 Definitions of the colours

1. black bay; a very dark red or brown horse with black mane, tail and lower legs.
2. sorrel; the word used before the 17th century for any reddish-brown coat colour with no black markings. Nowadays the generic term would be chestnut, while sorrel today is reserved for a light variety of chestnut: a reddish tan or red coat with no black. Dark ('sad') sorrel must mean something darker than this and may perhaps even denote the dark brown, so-called liver chestnut. The variety with light mane and tail (as in the text) is known as flaxen.
3. (d)apple-grey; a grey/white coat with black dapple. Dapple-greys are usually born black and gradually get more and more white hairs in their coat until, when they are old, they are fully white in colour. Those dapple-greys with white manes and tail (as in the text) are nowadays called silver dapple. The amount of dapple is also seasonal, with any dappling of the coat tending to increase in the summer.
4. dun; a yellowish or tan coat with black mane and tail and a black dorsal stripe ('liste') which is characteristic of the dun coloration.
5. mouse-dun; a mouse-coloured dun (modern 'grullo').
6. black; completely black with or without white 'points': i.e. white face marking, mane, tail or lower legs. B's 'coal black' refers to a black with no white points.

7. heron grey; probably the same colour as modern blue roan, although the terms iron grey or steel grey are also used. It describes a horse with white and dark hairs evenly intermixed over most of the body. The amount of grey in the coat also tends to vary with the seasons.

4.1.1.4 The tradition

The assessment of a horse's quality according to coat colour may perhaps owe its origins to the colours of warhorses the Old French epic heroes liked to ride in the earlier chivalric texts.²⁵ Top of the list in MS B is black bay. Bay was a popular epic and chivalric horse colour: the magic horse of Renaud de Montauban is called 'Bayard'. MS B's list does certainly include all the colours commonly cited in the epics (for which see Frappier 1959: 92, and more recently a very full treatment in Planche 1992). It seems likely that the text as it now stands was assembled from a variety of earlier traditions, including those that stress the advisability of selecting by features other than colour. These more practical qualities, to do with strength, soundness and temperament, are listed in B, as we have seen, under the first (*blak bay*) entry and re-invoked subsequently. One possible source is the 13th-century *Le Livre de Trésor* by Brunetto Latini, composed between 1263 and 1266. Planche (1992: 404) gives a selective quotation from this work of desirable points for a horse, which include a small, lean head, short ears and big eyes; but a thick mane and tail are specified rather than MS B's thin mane. Colour is of less importance but bay, dapple-grey, black, white and dun are mentioned in that order.

According to Planche (1992: 406) the white horse was most associated with beauty and that was the colour favoured by royalty and the nobility. White does not feature in the list in MS B. It was perhaps accidentally omitted, or was perhaps rejected as being too grand for the stable of a mere gentleman. In W it comes in at number four between dun and mouse-dun.²⁶ There it is said to be long-lived but tender and difficult to keep, and therefore needs cherishing if its work is to be true. This perhaps does reflect the fact that the white horse was seen as noble in nature. It is understood nowadays (though perhaps not in medieval times), that

²⁵ I owe this idea, and the following Frappier and Planche references, to Philip Bennett.

²⁶ MS C's imperfect version does not include this part of the text.

almost all white horses are in fact greys, and begin life darker, becoming lighter as they age. This may perhaps have helped the impression that they were long-lived and therefore more valuable. The plain grey horse, known in French as *ferrant* (the colour of iron) and later called *grisart* or *grisel*, is according to Planche (1992: 109) more equivocal: sometimes it seems to be associated with the bourgeois, populist choice; at other times it seems to be highly prized. The variant *aufe(r)rant*, influenced by the Arabic *al faras*, becomes synonymous with the archetypal fiery warhorse with little or no implication of colour. In both MS B and W, however, the plain grey horse comes bottom of the list as useless.

4.1.1.5 Points of linguistic interest and uncertainty

(a) *longe at the reyn*. No such phrase is recorded in either OED or MED. As an anatomical term the 'reins' in the plural may refer either to the kidneys or to the loins. In the singular 'rein' can only refer to a kidney. It is not plausible that the horse should be required to have long kidneys. It is not very likely either that it would be desirable for it to have a long loin. The loins of a horse are between the back and the haunch, the equivalent in the human body of the lumbar region. There seems no advantage to a horse for that area to be long, especially as the horse is specifically recommended to have a *short bakk*. Moreover, the W version, which lists more features than MS B, specifies that the horse should also be *shorte loyned*. Moreover, the features seem to be enumerated from the head backwards, and reference to the *reyn* comes with the description of the head. 'Rein' is also, of course, the word that designates the strip of leather that attaches to the bridle or bit of a horse on either side of its head and is used by the rider to guide the horse. It seems most likely that *longe at the reyn* here refers to part or all of the length along which the rein must extend: in other words, the distance between the withers (behind which the saddle and the rider sit) and the side of the mouth where the bit rests. If so, it is the equivalent of the modern equine conformation point that a horse should have 'a good length of rein'. Indeed, Malcolm Morley (pers. comm.) suggests that the phrase 'long at the rein' itself would be an acceptable way to describe the measurement even nowadays. The correct proportions of head, neck, shoulder and front leg not only give a pleasing

and balanced appearance, but also optimise the stride length and therefore the power, efficiency and speed of a galloping horse.

(b) *side-browyd~* and *side-rybbid~*. Neither of these collocations is attested in OED or in MED. OED s.v. *side adj.* has the following definitions: '1. a. large, ample, spacious, extensive'; '2. a. extending lengthways; long'; '3. Reaching or hanging far down on the person; long' and '[3.] b. 'of beard, hair etc. [long]'. Given that the horse needs to have ample room for its heart and lungs, so that it can run long and hard, there would seem to be no difficulty in defining *side-rybbid~* as 'broad-ribbed'. The definition of *side-browyd~* depends on what part of the horse's head the 'brow' is referring to. Unless the author has repeated himself (which of course is possible), it would seem not to be the same thing as the forehead, which has already been described as 'broad'.²⁷ In Old English, the 'brow' referred to the eyelashes; it would indeed be advantageous for a horse to have long eyelashes in order to prevent debris from getting into the eye. But it seems that this usage did not continue into Middle English; moreover, later in the text having long eyelashes is described as *welle herid~*. In Middle English, the word 'brow' can refer to the eyelid (whose length or breadth would not seem relevant to a horse whose eyes are already specified as large), to the arch of hair over the eye (which in a horse, however, is not different in kind from the rest of the facial hair) or to the forehead, which we have already discounted.

I suggest that *side-browyd~* may mean that the horse should have a long forelock. The forelock is the part of the mane that grows from the poll (or top of the head) down towards the eyes. It shields the horse's eyes from the sun and rain and also keeps debris out of the eyes. It might be

²⁷ In W, the reading is *side-brauned*, also an otherwise unattested collocation, which perhaps means 'long- or broad- muscled'. It may, however, simply be a mistake. In the very next line W refers to *a brode thyn legge*. In addition to the features listed by B, W also has *a brode holow doue fote shorte loyned and a long skete*. I can make nothing of either *doue* or *skete* in this context. Malcolm Morley (pers. comm.) has pointed out that nowadays, at this point in a horse's description, one would normally assess the amount of 'bone'. If a horse is said to have 'a lot of bone' it refers to the large circumference to the foreleg. W's text could well be a corruption of some such description. If so, then B's *side-browyd~* could perhaps have come about ultimately from a corruption of *side-brauned* 'broad-muscled' or even *side-boned* 'wide-boned'.

argued, since the specification *brode brest* comes between *thyn~ mane* and *side-browyd~*, that the text has moved on from the head, and that MS B's version has suffered corruption here. But consider the order of viewing the horse, which in the text is made very clear. Up to the point about the mane, one would have to be looking at the horse near the front end and at the side to observe the points. Also, since the horse's eyes are set in the side of his head, it is a good place to start. It is always advisable to begin horse-judging where the horse can see you, so that it does not become nervous and can gradually become used to the process. To judge the breadth of its breast one would have to move in front of the horse and look at it face on. One would then also be able to judge the length of the forelock, before moving on to assess its legs and then its hind-quarters and finally its overall stance. Perhaps some support for the definition of *syde-browyd~* as 'having a long forelock' is found in OED under 'brow, *n.*¹, sense 4. b. ?Part of a wig covering the brows', for which they cite 'c1485 *Digby Myst., Mor. Wisd. i.* (heading) Vpon his hed a cheveler [wig] with browes'.

(c) *Appulle grey with faire blakke dappell on the lemys*. There is no difficulty about the meaning of either *appulle grey* or *dappell*. What is of interest is that their appearance here as early as 1450, and in combination, fills a large gap in the attestation record.

MED does not record 'apple grey' at all. The term is the semantic equivalent of Old French *ferrant pomelé*, and it is assumed to have a connection with OF *pomel*, a diminutive of *pomme*, presumably because of the blotchy skin colour of some varieties of apple. Under its entry for 'pommely, *adj.*' OED conjectures that the French term might itself have been modelled on an unattested Frankish version of Old Saxon *appulgrê*. Under 'dapple-grey, *adj.* (and *n.*)', OED indicates that the 'apple grey' combination is common to most of the Germanic languages. They cite Old Norse *apalgrár* and then give equivalent forms attested from: Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Old High German, Middle High German, German, and Dutch. As far as early attestations are concerned, English is the odd one out. OED only lists the term 'apple-grey' itself under 'apple, *n.* Compounds C. 2 special combinations: apple-grey *adj.*'; and the earliest citation is in a Scots text from 1572. Our text in MS B antedates this by over 100 years.

The normal Middle English term for this coat colour on a horse, which appears from Chaucer (c. 1386) onwards, is 'dapple-grey'—the name we use today and that which appears in the W version of our text. OED defines 'dapple-grey' as: 'Grey variegated with rounded spots or patches of a darker shade: said of horses'. A variant of 'dapple-grey' is 'dappled grey' attested in the first half of the 15th century. The adjective 'dappled', with the general meaning 'spotted' or 'speckled' (of an animal's coat, though not necessarily of a horse), is also attested from early 15th century. 'Dapple' used as an adjective is found only from the mid 16th century, while the noun 'dapple' is only listed in OED from even later.²⁸ OED has two definitions for 'dapple, *n.*'. The first is: '1. One of many roundish spots or small blotches of colouring by which a surface is diversified.' Its earliest citation in this sense is from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (dated 1586): 'As many eyes vpon his bodie as my gray-mare hath dapples'. But OED's sense 2 is the one that appears in our text in MS B: '2. (without *pl.*) Spotting, clouding; mottled marking of a surface; dappled condition, dappling'. In this sense OED's earliest citation is labelled: '1627 J. HORSEY *Trav.* in E.A. Bond *Russia at Close of 16th Cent.* (1856) 220 A goodly fare white bull, all spotted over with black naturall dappell'. The MS B text provides an antedating therefore of at least 150 years. The combination in MS B of 'apple-grey' and the noun 'dapple' creates a connection between the two (as early as mid 15th century), evidence for which so far has been completely lacking.

(d) *on eyther side the nekke as hit were cronys þ^t twellis the here.* The word *cronys* 'crowns' here clearly refers to the so-called hair whorls that horses have in their coat, most often on the head and neck but sometimes also elsewhere. The whorl is formed by a patch of hair growing outwards from a central point. The scientific term for these patches is 'trichoglyphs'; they may also be termed 'swirls', 'cowlicks' or indeed 'crowns', although OED does not list the term 'crown' precisely in this usage.²⁹ They are not

²⁸ The only cognates for 'dapple' listed in OED are from Icelandic (13th century) *depill* 'spot' and words in Norwegian and Middle Low German meaning 'pool, pond' from which it is conjectured the word might originally have meant 'a splash' and hence 'a small blotch or speck of colour'.

²⁹ See, however, OED s.v. 'crown, *n.* III Something having the circular form of a crown or encircling wreath', after which many transferred uses are given.

always circular. The opposing direction of hair growth may meet along a line, causing a linear whorl and if the growth is angled at the line it will form a feathered pattern. Traditional (non-scientific) whorl lore connects the position and type of whorl to aspects of the horse's temperament. Perhaps this entry in our text is an early example of this type of tradition. What is interesting is how the neck whorls are said in MS B to 'twill the hair'. The noun 'twill', meaning a kind of woven cloth, is well attested from the early 14th century onwards; see MED s.v. 'twil(e (n.))' and OED s.v. 'twill | tweel *n.*'. The adjective 'twilled', is also cited from the 14th century in MED (s.v. 'twiled (adj.)') and in OED from the 15th century (s.v. 'twilled | tweeled, *adj.*'). The word 'twill' goes back to OE *twili*, which is a gloss of Latin *bilix*, 'with two threads' (cf. OED s.v. 'twilly *adj.* and *n.*'). OED defines 'twill' as 'A woven fabric characterised by parallel diagonal ridges or ribs, produced by causing the weft threads to pass over one and under two or more threads of the warp, instead of over and under in regular succession, as in plain weaving'. The result of such a weave is a herringbone effect very like that produced by a feathered hair whorl. The verb 'to twill' is cited in OED only from the 19th century (1808–18): 'twill | tweel *v.*¹ *trans.* To weave so as to produce diagonal ridges on the surface of the cloth'. This of course is the literal use in weaving, whereas in MS B the word is used metaphorically; the 'crowns' do the 'twilling' of the horse's hair to make the hair look like twilled cloth. Nevertheless, MS B's *twellis* antedates attestations for the verb by over 300 years. The W version has a paraphrase of MS B's version of the text: *yf.... he haue on the one syde or on bothe twyrrilys lyke crownes in the heer of the necke*. The noun 'twirl' (synonymous with 'whorl') is not cited in MED, and in OED the earliest attestation is itself merely a dictionary definition: '1598 *World of Wordes*, *Giro*, .. a twirle'. The first attestation in OED for the word in real use is from 1700. Wynkyn de Worde's 1502 print provides a significant antedating.

(e) *mely mouth*.³⁰ The adjective 'mealy' does not appear in MED. The relevant sense for 'mealy' is found in OED s.v. 'mealy, *adj.* 2 c. Of the coloration of an animal (spec. a horse): spotty or speckled with whitish specks; variegated, mottled'. OED cites nothing before 1610, when a horse

³⁰ W here has 'yf he haue a mele mouth'.

is referred to as having a 'mealy nose'. The same text also uses the variant 'mayly nose'; see OED s.v. 'maily *adj.*'.² The first listing for 'mealy mouth' in a horse is dated 1675. Again MS B provides a 200-year antedating.

(f) *heyron Grey*. It could be argued that *heyron grey* is simply a variant of the common term 'iron-grey'. OED entry s.v. 'iron *n.*' lists a large number of variant Middle English spellings for 'iron' including: *eiron*, *eyron*, *hyrone* and *herne*. The spelling *heyron* could plausibly be an extension of this set. It is certainly very likely that the variant came about as a result of JW meeting a form of this kind in his exemplar. But it appears that he could have misinterpreted it: his usual spellings for the word 'iron' are *yron* and *Iron*. The word 'heron' derives from OF *hairon*, *beiron* and its normal spellings in Middle English include *heyron(e)*, *heyroun* and *heiroun* beside *heroun* and *heron*. *Heyron* is certainly JW's normal spelling for the bird: on fol. 56v on the second page of the contents list in his copy of *the Chapters of diuers making~ and dyztyng~ of potagis and flesch~ sodyn~ & rostydy~ and of sleynge~ and dyztyng~ of wylde fowle*, he lists between *Quayle rostydy~* and *Bytere rostydy~* the dish *Heyron~ rostydy~*. The recipe itself appears on fols. 72v–73r and the spelling *heyron~* is adopted twice more. So when JW wrote *heyron Grey*, we can assume that 'heron-grey' was what he meant. The word 'heron' in Middle English refers to the common European grey heron not to the lesser white heron, for which the French derived 'egret' was used (*egrott rostydy~* appears in the list immediately underneath the entry for roast bittern). The heron is a long-legged, long-necked wading bird with a long, spear-shaped bill for catching fish and amphibians. It has a plain lightish-grey back and wings with a white neck and striking black brow-stripe and crest. It would have been a common bird in 15th-century rural Wiltshire, in spite of the numbers that may have ended up in the roasting oven. Heron-grey is a perfectly plausible colour name for a light steel-grey or blue roan and may perhaps have been a local usage. It is certainly not cited in MED or OED as a colour term, so MS B's attestation appears to be unique. I have not seen the other manuscript versions of the text, but W has *yren grey*.

4.1.2 The training and ‘salesman’ texts³¹

These have the following titles in MS B: *For to tame a wilde hors; For to teche a hors Ambyll; For to make a horse to folowe his maister; For make a hors to seme yonge; For to make a hors fatte; For to make a white marke on a hors; For a hors þ^t is Desy on the spore; For a reste hors*.³² These texts are all fascinating for the history of medieval horse husbandry of the late Middle Ages, but I have space to deal with only one of the texts in full. Thereafter, I will pick out from the others just one or two words of interest.

4.1.2.1 Making an old horse look young

[fol. 51r]

For to make a hors to seme yonge. Take an aylewand and make it crokyd the gretnes of a whete corne and bren an hole in þ^e Inneris tethe next the eye tothe and then take an old bladde & grave a-wey the shele þer-wyth then take a launcette and make a lytill hole thorowe the skynne in a place above the eye and blowe hit fulle of wyn [read wynd] wyth a penne then lete hym a-lone for the skyn wolle wax hole and thus schalle he seme yong.

Horses have six incisors in both top and bottom jaws: two central, two middle and two so-called corner teeth. The first set of these teeth is deciduous; the central pair appears when the foal is a week old, the middle pair at about a month of age and the corner pair at about a year. These are replaced by the permanent teeth, the central pair at two and half years, the middle pair at three and a half and the corner teeth at four and a half. For the interpretation of this text it will be useful to quote at length from the excellent (and very long) entry on ‘Farriery’ in the 1823 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (pp. 435–436):

[The corner teeth] differ also from the other fore-teeth, in this, that they somewhat resemble a shell; and thence are called the shell-teeth,

³¹ The surviving portion of the MS C text starts with this section (on fol. 65v), so we can now cross-reference between three versions.

³² MS C’s imperfect version lacks the first two texts. W has this group of texts in a different order. It includes in the group the colt-measuring text that comes first of all in MS B, and it misses out the text on how to make a horse fat. Both MS C and W include a text, not in MS B, on how to prevent a horse from neighing.

because they environ the flesh in the middle half-way round; and as they grow, the flesh within disappears, leaving a distinct hollowness and openness on the inside. [p. 436]... When a horse is full six years old the hollowness on the inside begins visibly to fill up, and that which was at first fleshy, grows into a brownish spot, not unlike the eye of a dried garden bean, and continues so till he is seven; with this difference only, that the tooth is more filled up, and the mark or spot becomes faint, and of a lighter colour. At eight, the mark in most horses is quite worn out..... It will perhaps be needless to mention the tricks that are used to make a false mark in a horse's mouth, by hollowing the tooth with a graver, and burning a mark with a small hot iron; because those who are acquainted with the true marks, will easily discover the cheat by the size and colour of the teeth, by the roundness and bluntness of the tusches, by the colour of the false marks, which is generally blacker, and more impressed than the true mark, and by many other visible tokens, which denote the advanced age of a horse..... The eye pits of a young horse ... are generally filled up with flesh, look plump and smooth; whereas in an old horse, they are sunk and hollow, and make them look ghastly, and with a melancholy aspect.

It is clear what the author of the 15th-century text is advising: *an aylewand* is the equivalent of 'a small hot iron'; *an old bladde* is the equivalent of 'a graver' and the distinguishing marks of a six-year-old horse are created in the much older one. Puffing the old horse's sunken supraorbital fossa full of air could also make him look younger—at least for long enough to encourage a buyer to part with the asking price.

From the linguistic point of view the words of interest are:

- (a) *an aylewand* (MS C *a naylewand*; W *a small rodde*)
- (b) *eye tothe* (MS C *tusche*; W no equivalent)
- (c) *old bladde* (MS C *ele-blade*; W *alblade*)
- (d) *shele* (MS C *shelle*; W *shell*)

(a) The word 'nail-wand' is not attested in either MED or OED. The context (and W's version) makes it clear that it is a small iron rod and it is obviously the same object as OED's 'nail-rod *n.* 1. a. A strip or rod of iron from which nails are cut'. The earliest attestation of 'nail-rod' is given as 1677. Another equivalent term 'nail-shank' is cited in OED s.v. *nail*, *n.* C. 3. with a quotation from 1839. The MS B and MS C texts' forms are

therefore new additions to the record, dating from the mid- to late-15th century.

(b) 'Eye-tooth' is not attested in MED. In OED the definition is given as 'A tooth immediately under or next to the eye, orig. one of the upper canine teeth ... , but now extended to the lower also'. The earliest citation is dated 1580. MS B's 'innerest tooth next to the eye-tooth' makes it very clear which tooth requires modification. The terms 'corner-tooth' and 'shell-tooth' to designate this tooth are not attested until the 18th century. MS B provides a 100-year antedating for 'eye-tooth'. MS C's *tusche* represents the word for a horse's canine tooth that became the norm in modern English, as the quotation above from *Encyclopedia Britannica* bears witness. It is quoted from MS C in MED s.v. tush (n.).

(c) MS B's *old bladde* 'old blade' seems a reasonable object to employ for scraping out the old horse's tooth; gravers come in various shapes and it would be the equivalent of a flat graver. It may, however, be a corrupt reading, since MS C and W agree in having forms of the word 'awl-blade', the equivalent of a pointed graver. Both MED (s.v. al (n.)) and OED (s.v. awl n.) have plentiful references for 'awl' which is known from Old English times. OED's definition is: '1. A small tool, having a slender, cylindrical, tapering, sharp-pointed blade, with which holes may be pierced; a piercer, pricker, bodkin'. The compound 'awl-blade' is, however, not recorded.

(d) MS B, MS C and W all agree on the word 'shell', albeit in different spellings. MED s.v. shel(le (n.)) has under 6 (a) the definition 'A scurf, scale: a coating layer'. It is possible that this is what the text refers to, but the context indicates that it is not so much that there is a coating or layer that is being graved away, but that the graving is (re-)creating a hollowed out shell-shape. We know from the description quoted from above, that this usage has to do with the horse's 'shell-teeth', nowadays called 'corner teeth'. These are the outermost of the cutting teeth (the front teeth in front of the cuspidate teeth or 'tushes'), which in turn are in front of the molars or grinders. They are called so because they have a hollow shell-like shape when the horse is young. So the sense required in our text is, specifically: 'hollowness, hollow shape'. OED s.v. shell n. II. has the definition 'A shell-shaped object; something concave or hollow' and

beneath this: '12. a. Applied gen. to a hollow spherical, hemispherical, or dome-shaped object', for which they give quotations from 1599 onwards.³³ The exact required sense is, however, not given.

4.1.2.2 Other points of linguistic interest in the training texts

(a) *Famysche the hors a dai and a nyght* [MS C: *famysshe your horse*]³⁴

This instruction occurs in the text *For to make a hors to folowe his maister*. It involves making a cake of honey and bread dough and impregnating it with your own sweat (and therefore presumably your scent). The horse must eat nothing for 24 hours, after which the cake is given to him. After you have also given the horse the *spatill of thi mouthe*, apparently he will follow you everywhere. The interest is in the use of the word 'famish'. OED s.v. *famish*, *v.* defines the word in its transitive uses as '1. To reduce to the extremities of famine and hunger; to starve' and '2. a. To kill with hunger, starve to death.' There are quotations from the 15th century onwards, but in all the early quotations the word is used in the passive and refers to people being 'famished' in conditions of famine or siege. In MS B and MS C we have an early example of transitive, active use of the verb. It is not possible to starve either man or horse to the point of death, or even major distress, in just 24 hours; and in any case that is obviously not what is intended. The idea here is to whet the horse's appetite, so that he is keen to eat the cake and associate the scent with his master. The required meaning is not 'starve' but 'fast'. OED s.v. *famish* *v.* sense 2. b. gives the meaning: 'To deprive (a person) of anything necessary to life'. There is a single quotation from Milton's *Paradise Lost* dated 1667: 'Where thin Aire Above the Clouds will .. famish him of Breath, if not of Bread'. This sense is perhaps close to the one needed, although not identical. 'Famish', used transitively and meaning 'fast' provides a new

³³ OED also has the entries: 'shell-tooth *n.* Obs. any of the teeth of a horse, which bear the mark' with citations from 1706 and 1832; and shell-toothed adj. with citations from 1717 and 1753. The latter runs: *Chambers Cycl. Suppl. Shell-toothed*, .. an appellation given to a horse that from five years old to old age naturally, and without any artifice, bears mark in all his fore teeth, and there still keeps that hollow place with the black mark.

³⁴ W has: *kepe thy horse fro mete a daye and a nyght*.

sense for 'famish', albeit one that does not seem to have continued long in English.

(b) *For a hors þ^t is Desy on the spore* [MS C: *..desy atte the spore*; W: *..dulnesse of the sporre*]

This is a very unpleasant text for modern sensibilities. You are instructed to shave the horse's sides, the breadth of a saucer, where the spur normally strikes, and to make six *issuez* (i.e. 'incisions') each side with a lancet. You then raise the skin with a *handler* (i.e. 'retractor') and rub in burnt salt to make the place rankle. Four days later, presumably when it is really sore, you put a lad on the horse and get him to spur the horse in the sore places. After that you wash the place with a mixture of urine, salt and nettles to 'grieve' the horse even more, after which, not surprisingly, the horse will *neuer a-byde* [i.e. 'withstand'] *the spore aftir*. Rather endearingly, once you have gained the required result, you are told to *a-noynt his sydys with hony and he schalle be hole*.

The message of the text and W's reading (*For dulnesse*), makes it clear that the horse is simply not responsive to the spur: a state of affairs that would be irritating for a rider in a hurry. The point of interest is the term *desy*³⁵ in this context. It is clearly the word 'dizzy' (< OE *dysig*) which in Middle English is found with all the expected reflexes from an Old English -y-word: *disi*, *dusi*, *desi*. In Old English *dysig* meant 'foolish, stupid' and this sense continued into Middle English. But in the 14th century, the meaning 'giddy, with a feeling of vertigo' begins to take over. For the sense 'foolish, stupid', OED s.v. *dizzy adj.* says: 'Now only *dial.* (Not in general use since 13th c.)'. The OED attestation record has nothing for this sense between 1275 and two dialect citations from 1876 and 1893. The 1876 one is itself a definition: 'F.K. ROBINSON *Gloss. Words Whitby, Dizzy*, half-witted'. It is this sense of dizzy, as stupidly dull-witted and unresponsive, that is required in our text. MS B (from Wiltshire) and MS C (perhaps

³⁵ In both MS B and MS C *desy* is written with long 's'. Braekman's (1986: 74) edition of MS C reads *defy*, presumably on the premise that the cross-stroke of the letter 'f' has been accidentally omitted. I assume he takes the meaning to be 'defiant'. There is no otherwise recorded example of the use of the verbal form for the adjective, and the sense is in fact not really apposite because the 'cure' given is not for an animal that is fighting the spur but one for which the message of spurring has simply not got to the brain. The horse is unresponsive and dull when spurred, not defiant.

from somewhere in the N Midlands) provide 15th-century examples for this usage, which may or may not at that date have been general or only local. (For ‘issue’ and ‘handler’ see further §4.1.3.1 no 16. below.)

(c) *then he wille bore forth* [MS C: *lepe forwarde for fere*; W: *sterte forward*] The phrase *bore forth* in MS B occurs in another text that is not for the squeamish. This horse is similar to the *desy* one; he is *reste* [MS C: *Restyff*; W: *reste*]. To cure the problem, you are instructed to take a four-fold whipcord and make a shackle above the horse’s *coddys* (i.e. ‘testicles’). You then tie to this shackle a thin cord that comes under the horse’s belly and between his forelegs and so up to the saddlebow. Then a lad has to sit on the saddle and ride him, and when he *taketh his fulle* [i.e. ‘foul’] *cours* the lad has to spur him and pluck at the cord. He is to continue with this lesson three or four times a day, and then the horse will stop the bad behaviour. For MS B’s phrase *taketh his fulle cours*, MS C has *takyth his foule tayche* and W has *useth his foule tatche*. A ‘foul tache’ here means ‘fault’, ‘vice’ or ‘bad habit’ (see OED s.v. *tache* n.¹ 2. a.). It is clear from the text that the modern senses of the words ‘resty’, ‘restiff’ and ‘restive’ are not the appropriate ones: the horse is not fidgety, restless or erratic. Here the required meaning is ‘refusing to go forward’ or ‘sluggish, lazy, inactive’ (see OED s.v. *resty* adj.² (and *adv.*), I. 1 and II. 4. a.), ‘stubbornly standing still or moving backwards or sideways’ or ‘(more generally) resisting control, unmanageable’ (see OED s.v. *restiff*, adj. 1. a.). When the lad plucks the cord and the shackle nips the horse’s testicles, the horse ceases to be ‘resty’ or ‘restiff’ and leaps or starts forward. The point of linguistic interest lies in MS B’s version of this result: *bore forth*. The verb ‘bore’ normally means to pierce or drill into. From this sense is derived a transferred and intransitive meaning not found in MED, but listed in OED s.v. *bore*, v.¹ 3. d. ‘Of a horse: To thrust the head straight forward’. The earliest citation (and the only apposite quotation) given is a definition from 1731: ‘N. BAILEY *Universal Etymol. Eng. Dict.* II, [With horsemen] a horse is said to boar or bore, when he shoots out his nose as high as he can’. MS B *bore forth* is therefore a specialised horseman’s term for ‘shoot forward headlong’ which is exactly what one might expect the horse to do in the pertaining circumstances. It is an attestation in real usage and an antedating of over 150 years.

4.1.3 The medical part of the text

MS B (fols. 51v–55v) then deals with 37 problems, complaints or diseases that may be found in the horse, and details how to effect a cure in each case. MS C has only 22 of these before it ends imperfectly. As pointed out in §4 above, it includes a text (*For the mareffownde*) that does not appear in MS B or in W. W (which may have been put together from more than one source) has 49 complaints, 36 of which are in MS B.

4.1.3.1 The complaints

It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the detail of the cures for each of the complaints. Some involve simple surgical procedures, to which I will give some attention. The non-surgical and post-procedural treatments are confined for the most part to plasters and ointments. Their ingredients vary according to the action desired. Almost all involve antiseptic qualities: salt, honey, vinegar, rue, southernwood, red fennel. Some are cooling, soothing and/or emollient: animal fat, egg white, bayberries, mallow, tansy, vervain and balm. Some are caustic (for scouring bony or other growths): unslaked lime, verdigris, black soap (which contained lye), and onion (often used as the vehicle of application). For wounds, whether or not surgically produced, alum is used as an astringent, and melted wax and resin as sealants. Hay and flax, tied on with rope, are used as protective bandages for the legs. Some of the herbal ingredients may also have had anti-bacterial effects, which the creators of the cures would not have known about directly. Herring roe and milt are sometimes employed, in combination with other ingredients, for plasters. Fish roe and milt are full of amino acids, which could perhaps help to build proteins, but I do not know if their topical application would be efficacious, nor the extent to which their properties would have been understood in the 15th century.

Below I list all the complaints dealt with in MS B.³⁶ Under each I give either a modern English translation or a paraphrase of its definition in MS B itself. Some discussion of linguistic points of interest may then

³⁶ Only substantive differences found in MS C and/or W are added. Their ordering is sometimes different from that in MS B. The numbering in the text is supplied for reference. The complaints are not numbered in either MS B or MS C. W has its own numbering system.

be given. Finally, for each complaint, OED and (where present) MED citations are given for any vocabulary of interest. Where MS B provides an antedating this is noted.

1. *For a retrete*

The text says that a retreat is when a nail is struck into the sensitive part of a horse's foot and it makes the horse lame.

Not in MED. OED s.v. retreat *n.* under sense 7. '*Farriery*. A stab or prick to a horse's foot with a nail, which is then withdrawn; the injury caused by this'. The earliest quotation is from 1566. Antedating: 100 years.

For the sensitive part of the foot MS C and W both use the phrase *quykke off the fote* [W: *quycke*]. 'Quick' in this sense is obviously the 'living' part of the hoof, which is supplied with nerve endings, and so is painfully responsive when pierced with the nail. This type of shoeing accident is still called 'quicking' in modern farriery (*HOVH* 2008: 206). In MS B the phrase used is *pulle of the fote*. To interpret *pulle* the anatomy of the horse's hoof must be understood. The hoof consists of both sensitive and insensitive layers or laminae. Each layer of sensitive lamina (or corium) produces a layer of insensitive lamina. The junction between the insensitive horny part of the hoof (the hoof wall) and the sensitive inner sole is the so-called white line, which appears on the bottom of the foot. It can thus be used as a guide to show where nails should be driven when shoeing the horse. If the farrier accidentally strikes a nail through the white line, it pierces one or more of the sensitive laminae—the 'quick' part. MS B's *pulle* is a more specific term than 'quick'. I take it to be a form of the word 'pill' (derived from an unattested Old English verb **pylian*, 'to peel'). OE *y* frequently has *-u-* reflexes in western or west-midland Middle English, so *pulle* would be expected in Wiltshire for this word. The noun 'pill' can mean the skin or rind of a fruit, which is also one of the definitions of the Latin word *lamina*. The use of *pulle* in MS B would appear to represent a direct calque on *lamina*.

The word is hitherto unrecorded in this sense, but cf.:

MED s.v. pil(e (n.(2)) (b) 'a peel or rind of a fruit or vegetable';

OED s.v. pill *n.*² 1. 'A covering or outer layer of a fruit or vegetable; a skin, husk, rind, or shell';

Lewis & Short s.v. lamina II. E. 'The tender shell of an unripe nut. Ov. Nux, 95'.

Unrecorded meaning.

2. *For a Grawellyng*

None of the versions of the text defines this problem but all proceed straight to the remedy, which requires that you cut the hoof as far as the sore, presumably in order to let the pus drain; and then pack the place with hot melted wax and animal fat (deer suet and boar's grease)—presumably to seal and protect the wound and to keep it from drying out. After that you can ride him where you will.

Not in MED. OED s.v. *gravelling*, n. sense 2. says: '*Farriery*. A disease in a horse's foot'. The earliest quotation is from ?1523 which is from Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandry*, and which provides a number of OED's earliest citations for the horse medicine vocabulary (for which see also any '?1523' or 1523–34 datings in the material below). The quotation explains the name 'gravelling' because it is said to come 'of grauell and lyttel stones that goth in between the shough [i.e. 'shoe'] and the herte of the fote'.³⁷ Antedating 50+ years.

This injury is still known as 'gravel', and is one of the possible causes of foot abscess in horses. Whether or not gravel or other foreign bodies accompany the injury, 'it allows infection to invade the deep structures of the foot. Because these infections cannot drain through the site of injury, pus will follow the path of least resistance and travel up the white line to drain at the coronary band' (*HOVH* 2008: 211)³⁸. The treatment nowadays is not so different from that in MS B. Draining the abscess and keeping the wound clean are the primary necessities.

3. *For the teynt in the bele*

Atteynt is when the horse overreaches and hits the forefoot with the hindfoot and becomes lame. The treatment in MS B involves binding tight the lower leg between the knee and the fetlock and making incisions into the backs of the heels at the *valis* (i.e. 'valleys') below the pastern with a *fleme* (i.e. 'lancet') to let out the *matier* (i.e. 'matter' or 'pus'). Tight binding of the leg would have stopped any bleeding of the injury and could also perhaps have acted as a tourniquet above the sore place,

³⁷ There is a cross-reference in OED to *gravel* v. sense 5. '*Farriery*. in *pass.* and *intr.* Of a horse, or its feet: To be injured by particles of gravel or sand being forced between the shoe and the hoof' (earliest quotation 1593).

³⁸ The coronary band (or coronet) is located at the hairline along the top of the hoof wall.

to desensitise the leg. A plaster of white of egg and flax (presumably soothing) with salt (antiseptic) provides the rest of the treatment in MS B, and it will heal it so that it will be sound forever.

MED s.v. *teint* (n.(1)) sense (e). Quotation from MS C.

OED s.v. *taint* *n.* sense 2. Earliest quotation 1566.

MED s.v. *atteinte* (n.) No citation with this meaning.

OED s.v. *attaint* *n.* sense 3. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating 50+ years.

4. *For a Strayte Foof* [read *Hoof*]

That is when the hove grouyth by the here [i.e. 'hair']. MS C has *grovetth to strayt by the here*.

No description of this condition is given. It is perhaps most likely to refer to what now would be called a boxy hoof or clubfoot. This is a congenital abnormality, in which the front wall of the hoof is narrow from side to side and grows almost vertically down from the hair—that is the coronet where the hair of the leg meets the place where the hoof growth is initiated. The result is a heel that is too high and the frog clefts too deep. The only treatment nowadays is continued remedial farriery to trim the heel and ensure a reasonable length of toe. MS B's text, however, does not give any such instructions, but goes straight to the remedy. This is merely a hot poultice of bacon-rind, white soap, laurel and rue, which would seem to be generally soothing in quality, and to keep the hoof dry. Then he shall be whole.

5. *For a lowse hoof*

No definition is given in our text, but this condition almost certainly refers to laminitis. Inflammation weakens the laminae, which are the living glue that keeps the hoof together. Then the pedal bone will drop, possibly rotate, and separate from the hoof at the laminae. The cure in MS B involves applying a plaster containing tar, rosin and wax and then he shall be whole. In the absence of modern veterinary techniques, the medieval horse doctor would perhaps have had no option other than to pack the hoof with prosthetic materials resembling the consistency of the hoof wall.

6. *For A ryngbone*

No definition is given in our text, but the condition bears the same name today. It is a ring of bony growth somewhere on the pastern between the hoof and the fetlock. The remedy in MS B is the application of a caustic plaster for three days and then he shall be whole.

MED s.v. ring-bon (n.) sense (a). Citations from 1362 onwards.

OED s.v. ringbone *n.* sense 2. a. Citations from 1362 onwards.

7. *For stonys in the Pastron~* [MS C: *For a-stony in þe pasteron~*; W: *For a stounde in the pastron*]

This happens when a horse stumbles, slips or steps into a hole and wrenches his foot which strains or sprains the pastern ligaments. The remedy is a hot poultice of soothing herbs and then he shall be whole. The reading *stonys* in MS B presumably refers to the hardness of resultant swelling. In MS C the sense 'stun', seems to be implied. W's *stounde* simply means a sharp pain.

MS B: MED s.v. ston (n.) sense 13 (b). 'A hard lump or swelling in the body; also, a lump of scarified tissue'. Quotation c1425. Cf. OED s.v. stone *n.* sense 10 a. 'A hard morbid concretion in the body'; but only internal stones are referred to, not external growths.

MS C: OED s.v. astony *v.* in the senses that refer to stupefying or stunning with a blow. Quotations from c1330 onwards (cf. also no. 15 below). Contrast, however, MED s.v. stonen (v. (1)) sense 3. (a) 'To cause (a horse, the joint of a horse's leg) to develop a hard growth'. MED uses this very quotation from MS C, but reads *a stony* as two separate words. Presumably the editors take *stony* to be an infinitive, though how the sentence is to be parsed is unclear.

OED s.v. stound *n.*¹ sense 2. b. 'a sharp pain, a pang; a fierce attack, a shock'. Quotations from c.1300 onwards.

8. *For the serewe with-in the legge*

The text describes this as an almond-sized gristly growth on the middle of the inner foreleg of the horse. It is presumably the commonly found callosity that is nowadays known as a 'chestnut' or 'night eye'. These vary in size and shape and are now known to be harmless, but are sometimes thought unsightly and are disguised, or trimmed for the sake of neatness. The 'treatment' in our text is the application of a caustic plaster, which will make him whole in a day and a night.

Not in MED. OED s.v. screw(e, *n.* 'A bony excrescence on the leg of a horse'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

9. *For wynde-gallis*

The text describes this as being as big as a date and lying by and a little above the lowest joint of the horse's foot. MS B's remedy is informative, if disturbing: *take a launcet and where hit is hyst pryk hit in \ the lengthe of a bene but be ware of the senewys for hurtyng~ and ther wille \ come ther-of as it were the white of an egge*. Thereafter, ever optimistic, MS B says that application of a soothing plaster will make him whole in a day.

This complaint is still called windgall and the description makes it clear that it refers to tendinous windgall rather than fetlock joint windgall. The latter refers to the distension of the fetlock joint. Tendinous windgall is inflammation of the digital sheath, which lubricates the passage of the main tendons round the back of the fetlock. The sheath contains synovial fluid, which is indeed tenacious and stringy, like eggwhite. Nowadays such an injury would be treated as a surgical emergency, and if the synovial fluid became infected the horse would be likely to die. MS B's remedy would seem rash in the extreme in relation to modern veterinary practice, but we may perhaps infer that there was little alternative.

Not in MED. OED s.v. windgall *n.*¹ 'A soft tumour on either side of a horse's leg just above the fetlock, caused by distension of the synovial bursa'. Earliest quotation 1523–34.

Antedating: 50+ years.

10. *For a splent*

The text simply says that it grows under the knee. The remedy is application of a hot caustic plaster for two days and nights and then he will be whole.

MED has no citation of the word in this sense.

OED s.v. splint *n.* sense 5. a. 'A callous tumour developing into a bony excrescence formed on the metacarpal bones of a horse's or mule's leg, occurring usually on the inside of the leg along the line of union of the splint-bones with the cannon-bone'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

11. *For a malander*

MS B says: *A malander is a sore [in] the fore legge be-hynde the wyndyng~ of the knee.* (MS C has *bendyng~ of the kne* and W has *bendynge of the knee.*) The remedy is the application of a plaster of herring milt, black soap and alum and in three days he will be whole. Scabby sores behind the knee are commonest when there is a lot of leg hair, as with draught horses. The hairiness makes the animals more susceptible to chorioptic mites, which would be the most likely cause of this condition.

The origin of the name is from Middle French *malandre*

MED s.v. malaunder (n.) 'Scabs, sores'. No citation specific to horses.

OED s.v. mallender, *n.* 'Originally: a sore located behind a horse's knee'. Earliest quotation 1440 but not with reference to horses, for which the earliest is ?1523.

For MS B's *wyndyng~* of the knee see:

OED s.v. wind *v.*¹ sense 5. b. '*intr.* To take or have a bent form'. Earliest quotation from c1374 (Chaucer), but not recorded as the verbal noun nor in anatomical contexts.

Unrecorded meaning.

12. *For the gorge in the legge*

The text says that this is caused by the horse becoming heated from work, and then being stabled cold. The blood runs down into his legs and makes them swell. The remedy is to sear him above the knee and then wrap his legs with bandages of hay soaked in cold water and he will be whole in a day. This condition may perhaps be cellulitis.

MED has no citation of the word in this sense.

OED s.v. gorge *n.*¹ sense 8. Earliest quotation 1610.

Antedating: 150 years.

13. *For the Farson~*

The text describes this as coming from a great abundance of blood rising like weals in different places on the horse's body. The remedy is to let blood in the neck and sides and to give him a cold drink of water that has been boiled with salt, rue and hemp seed, and a herb called matfellow (*Metfōln~*). Thereafter he shall be whole. This condition is still called farcy and is caused by the bacterium *Buckholderia mallei*. It has, however, now been eradicated in Europe. In farcy, the bacterial infection causes

the skin lesions described in MS B. The same bacterium also causes the internal symptoms of glanders, described in no. 18 below.

MED s.v. *farsi*(n (n.)) 'A disease of horses ... characterized by swollen lymphatics, small tumors and sores'. Quotations from c1380 onwards.

OED s.v. *farcin* *n.* and *farcy* *n.* sense 1. a. 'A disease of animals, *esp.* of horses, closely allied to glanders'. Quotations from a1425 onwards.

14. *For a melette* [W: *molet*]

The text says that this is a grey scale on the heel that comes about because the horse is not wiped clean and is stabled wet. The remedy is a caustic and astringent plaster for five days. After that, take away the plaster and wrap the leg in hay and in a day he will be whole. This would probably be one of a number of different conditions nowadays referred to generally as mudfever. Such conditions may be caused by bacterial infection, general sensitivity, or chorioptic mites. See also no. 16 below.

MED has no citation of the word in this sense.

OED s.v. *mellit*, *n.* 'A skin lesion or disease affecting the heels of the horse'. Earliest quotation 1610.

Antedating: 150 years.

15. *A-stonyd~ in the shulder* [MS C: *For a-stony in þe shulder*; W: *For the stonyng in the shulder*]

The text merely says that this happens when a horse stumbles. For this complaint, which clearly also results in considerable painful swelling, one has to lance the skin between the horse's spauld (i.e. shoulder) and marrowbone (i.e. knee), put a quill in the incision, blow the skin up away from the flesh and then *bruse out the blode*. Thereafter a recipe for a soothing ointment is given, which has to be applied to the shoulder every day until the horse recovers, but he must be rested seven days.

This is a very puzzling description. The 'stunning' of the shoulder might seem to suggest the result of an impact injury. A condition in horses, nowadays called Sweeney, is shoulder atrophy resulting from nerve damage, usually after a horse collides with something. A blow to the shoulder with tissue damage could also plausibly result in a subcutaneous haematoma, which seems to be what the rest of the description refers to. Neither, however, coincide well with the assertion that the condition arises from the horse stumbling. Malcolm Morley (pers. comm.) also

observes that when horses have problems in the foot or lower leg (e.g. from a stumble), the injury can often result in compromised movement that looks more like a shoulder problem. Quite what condition, or combination of conditions, is referred to in MS B here remains uncertain.

See the references under no. 7, above. and cf.:

MED s.v. *astoned*, *astouned* (ppl.), sense 4. (a): 'Of the senses, mental faculties, parts of the body, etc.: dulled, benumbed, deadened'. Earliest quotation 11398.

OED s.v. *astonied* ppl. sense 1. b. 'Of parts of the body: Rendered powerless, or functionless'. Quotations from mid 14th century.

For the 'bruising' or squeezing out of the blood, see:

OED s.v. *bruise* v. sense 5. 'To crush by pressure, jam, squeeze'. Earliest citation 1614.

Antedating: 150 years.

16. *For the paynes*

The text says that these grow in the heel from great abundance of blood falling down into the feet. If the horse is not exercised quickly this causes the sinews to rot and *to mater*. The remedy is first surgical and then a hot astringent plaster is to be applied to the wound for three days and he shall be whole. The plaster, among many other ingredients, includes *barker is* [i.e. 'barker's'] *dust*. The surgery is as follows. A handbreadth above the knee, make an incision above the great vein and take out the vein with a *handler* [i.e. 'retractor']. Tie off the vein between the retractor and the body; then beneath the retractor make an *issue* in the same vein so that all the blood can run out. After the astringent plaster, an ointment of tar and honey applied once a day is recommended. MS C says that when they rot, the sinews are *Craichid~ & materyd*.

MED s.v. *pein(e)* (n.) sense 4. (e) '*pl.* a disease in the feet of horses'. Earliest quotation 1440.

OED s.v. *pain* n.¹ sense 3. e. 'In *pl.* A disorder characterized by the formation of sores on the feet and legs of horses (perh. mud fever)'. Earliest quotation 1440.

MED either does not record the words dealt with in this section below, or has no citations with the relevant senses. For *barker is dust* cf.:

OED s.v. *barker* n.² sense 1. A tanner.

Oak bark was used in the tanning process, and barker's dust is presumably powdered oak bark. 'Barker's dust' has not hitherto been recorded; nor, incidentally has 'tanner's dust'.

New compound.

For MS C's *Craichid*~ cf.:

OED s.v. *cratch* *n.*¹ sense 2. *pl.* 'A disease in the feet of horses; the *scratches*'. Earliest quotation ?1523. cf. also:

OED s.v. *scratch* *v.* sense 11. '*intr.* Of horses: To contract the disease known as 'the scratches' in the hoofs'. Earliest quotation 1737.

'Cratched' meaning afflicted with 'cratches' seems not be recorded hitherto.

Unrecorded meaning.

Judging from the connections above, it does seem likely that (like no. 14 above) *the paynes* is one of the conditions that nowadays would be called mud fever. This particular variant is also known as scratches or grease heel (*HOVH* 2008: 123), and would have been caused by chorioptic mites. These most commonly infect horses with hairy legs and feathered feet and can cause severe itchiness. The surgical procedure described in our text was presumably required when the condition had led to swelling and bacterial infection.

For MS B's *handler* (MS C's *(h)avndeler*; not in W) see:

OED s.v. *handler* *n.* But the word is nowhere recorded in the required sense. It must be some sort of retractor for lifting out and holding a vein or sinew. The word also occurs in the treatment in §4.1.2.2. (b) above: *For a hors þ^t is Desy on the spore*, and below in no. 17. *For a spavayn*.

The sense 'retractor' should therefore be added to this word.

Unrecorded meaning.

For MS B's *issue* (MS C's *yssew*, and cf. §4.1.2.2. (b) above) see:

OED s.v. *issue* *n.* sense 4. b. 'An incision or artificial ulcer made for the purpose of causing [such] a discharge'. Earliest quotation 1607.

Antedating: 150 years.

For MS B's *to mater* and MS C's *materyd* see:

OED s.v. *matter* *v.* sense I. 1. a. 'To secrete or discharge matter or pus; to suppurate'. Earliest quotation 1530.

Antedating: 50+ years.

OED s.v. *mattered* *adj.* 'Containing matter or pus'. Earliest quotation 1576.

Antedating: 100+ years.

17. *For a spavayn~*

The text says that this grows on the hind leg first like gristle and then as hard as bone and the size of half an egg. The remedy is a surgical procedure similar to that for the pains (cf. no. 16 above). You have to open the skin near the great vein above the knee and lift out the vein with a retractor and tie it off above the retractor. This time, though, you pierce the skin again a finger's breadth beneath the knee, and take out the vein again and tie it off beneath the retractor. Then the vein must be cut in two above the lower knot and below the upper knot and the affected piece of vein thrown away. Then you make an incision the length of a date in the highest part of the spavin, take a chisel with the edge no broader than that of a penny and cut off from the spavin a bit the size of an almond. After that you put ground *nervalle* into the hole to scour it out. After three days, you wash out the corrosive to prevent too much damage and treat the sore with a healing plaster and then you can ride him where you will and he will be sound.³⁹ Nowadays there are two conditions called spavin. MS B's description makes it clear that the one referred to is what is now called bone spavin. The other is bog spavin, which is distension of the main joint of the hock, and contains fluid not hard bony tissue.

MED s.v. *spavein(e)* (n.) 'A swelling on the leg of a horse causing lameness, spavin'. Quotations for 1440 onwards.

OED s.v. *spavin*, *n.*¹ 1. a. 'A hard bony tumour or excrescence formed at the union of the splint-bone and the shank in a horse's leg, and produced by inflammation of the cartilage uniting those bones'. Quotations from 1426 onwards.

It is difficult to know what to make of *nervalle*. OED s.v. *nerval* *n.* has citations from 1450 onwards but the definition based on the quotations is for a medicinal ointment for the sinews, not for a corrosive, which is

³⁹ MS B's version of this text shows some corruption with probably a line or two having been missed out. It suggests the chiselling off from the spavin the *quantite of a hanfulle and more*, which must refer rather to the ingredients for the remedy. I therefore paraphrase the description mainly from MS C's more correct version.

clearly its function in our text. MS C says the nerval-based ointment *will scour the ground* and then you must wash out the *coresyff* (i.e. ‘corrosive’) and the matter that the *coresyff* has worked on, and not let it lie any longer or it will hurt the bone. The function of the nerval could not be clearer, yet its use does not match any of the citations in OED.

?Unrecorded meaning

[MS C misses out nos. 18–22. W has 18–22 but later and not in the same order. It lacks no. 21]

18. *For the Glaundrez*

MS B’s text explains that this lies first like a roasted eel and then grows between the jaw-bones and the wesand (i.e. ‘throat’), where it congeals. The remedy is to take a little iron rod and make it crooked the length of a bean and make it red-hot. You put this through the skin on either side of the throat so that the matter can come out and then wash the place with tanner’s water and salt and he shall be whole forever. Glanders is caused by the same bacterium as causes farcy (no. 13 above). According to Malcolm Morley (pers. comm.) the description of glanders here is more like what is now called strangles, which is a generic term referring to swelling of the lymph nodes caused by *Streptococcus equi*. It is possible that the term *Glaundrez* in MS B refers to both conditions, since in the 15th century the necessary bacterial knowledge to separate them would not have been available. Glanders is communicable to man, but strangles is not.

MED s.v. *glaundres* (n.) ‘A contagious disease of horses, communicable to man’. Quotations from c1410 onwards.

OED s.v. *glanders* (n.) sense 2. a. ‘*pl.* (const. as *sing.*) (*the*) *glanders*: a contagious disease in horses, the chief symptoms of which are swellings beneath the jaw and discharge of mucous matter from the nostrils’. Earliest quotation from ?1523.

It seems that the disease described in our text had not got to the stage of the mucous discharge.

19. *For the coughthe*

The text gives no definition, presumably because none was thought to be needed. The remedy calls for a liquid dose or drench made from goat’s milk with a quart of *werte* (i.e. ‘an infusion of malt’) mixed with oatmeal, roasted garlic, onion and honey all ground together and boiled with the

milk. Once cooled this drench has to be given to the horse on an empty stomach. It is given him to drink *wyth a horn*. Thereafter he must not be allowed to drink when he is hot because that brings on the cough. This treatment will heal him of his cough.

The administration of fluids to the horse *wyth a horn* is used in several of the remedies, including the one for making a horse fat, where large quantities of ale are given to the horse by that means. The ale would no doubt have caused the dry oats and hard boiled eggs he is also given to swell up and bloat making the horse look fat and well fed. It is clear from medieval illustrations of the administering of drenches that the narrow end of the cow-horn or ox-horn is cut off, and the instrument used as a naturally shaped funnel to pour the liquid down the horse's throat. Nowadays, more sophisticated drenching bottles and syringes are used (*HOVH* 2008: 597–598).

OED s.v. horn *n.* sense III. 12. a. 'A vessel formed from the horn of a cow or other beast, or in later times shaped after this, for holding liquid (as drink, oil, or ink), powder, etc.; a drinking-horn; a powder-flask; also, a similarly shaped vessel for cupping. Hence a hornful; a draught of ale or other liquor.' The word is used in this sense from Old English times onwards, but there is no record of it being modified into a funnel. Cf. OED 'drenching-horn' under drenching *n.* where the definition is given 'a device for giving a medicinal drench to animals'. The earliest quotation for this compound is 1698. The word horn should have added to its attested senses that it may be modified to serve as a funnel for administering drenches to animals.

Unrecorded meaning.

20. *For the Pursee hors*

The text gives no definition, presumably because it was well known that *pursee* meant asthmatic or wheezy. MS B proceeds straight to the recipe for a liquid medication that seems to be designed as a decongestant, because it will make him cough and *cast out all his maladye and his maladye will breke be the vertu of his medecyn*~. He will be whole in four days. Nowadays, asthma in horses is referred to as RAO (recurrent airway obstruction) and the treatment would involve plenty of fresh air and keeping the horse outside rather than in a stable.

MED s.v. *pursi* (adj.) 'Asthmatic, short-winded'. Quotations from 1440 onwards.

OED s.v. *pursy* *adj.* sense 1. 'Short of breath, wheezy, asthmatic'. Quotations from 1440 onwards.

21. *For the trunchis* (W: *The trenches*)

MS B describes the *trunchis* as small worms longer than *bottez* that breed in the horse's gut as a result of it eating *molet hey and moysted bredde*. The remedy is a liquid dose of malt infusion on an empty stomach. He must not eat for a night before or four hours after and he shall be whole. These worms are probably large strongyles (*Strongylus vulgaris*), which are very susceptible to modern anti-parasitic drugs, and have now been virtually wiped out in Europe.

Not in MED. OED s.v. *trunch*, *n.* records only the senses 'truncheon' or 'post, stake'. See, however:

MED s.v. *tronchoun* (*n.*) sense 4. 'A short, thick parasitic worm which affects horses and humans.' Quotations from 1440 onwards.

OED s.v. *truncheon* *n.*³ sense 5. 'An intestinal worm, short and thick in form, parasitic in horses.' Quotations from 1440 onwards.

The word 'trunch' requires this sense to be added to its record.

Unrecorded meaning.

For W's *trenches*, see:

MED s.v. *trench* (*n.*) sense (c) 'a parasite, prob. an intestinal worm; ? a sharp pain in the belly; also, an ailment afflicting horses, prob. colic'. Quotations from 1450 onwards.

OED s.v. *trench* *n.* sense 8. 'A griping or colic in the horse; also, a kind of worm infesting the horse.' Earliest quotation 1578.⁴⁰

The word *bottez* refers to a variety of parasitic flies or their maggots, but here they are the larvae of the botfly that lays its eggs on the horse's legs or nose. The eggs are transferred to the mouth by licking and from there to the digestive tract where they hatch. The larvae then attach themselves to the lining of the stomach.

⁴⁰ I cannot verify that W's text concerns the same ailment as that of MS B, because I could not access from the electronic version of W the last 17 texts cited in its table of contents.

MED s.v. bot (n.) (2) defines the word only in the sense of a parasite infesting the skin, with a single quotation from a1475. For the sense required in our text see:

OED s.v. bot | bott, *n.*¹ sense 1. a. 'A parasitical worm or maggot [...] inhabiting the digestive organs of the horse'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

The phrase *molet hey and moysted bredde* seems to mean 'soiled hay and damp food'. For *molet* see:

MED s.v. moled (ppl.) 'Spotted, soiled' and

OED s.v. mole, *v.*¹ '*trans.* To spot, stain; to cover with moles or other blemishes. Only in *pass.*'.

Both have as the earliest quotation c1400 (1378). This shows the word only in figurative use—in *Piers Plowman*, the coat of Christendom is soiled with the spots of vices. Thereafter, OED only has quotations from 1843 onwards. The derivation given for 'moled' is from the noun: OED mole *n.*¹ sense 1. 'A discoloured spot, esp. on cloth, linen, etc.' and MED mol (n) (3). 'A spot or stain: a mark or blemish'. The hay in MS B's text seems rather to have been soiled with contaminated liquid for which the word 'moil' is a better fit:

OED s.v. moiled *adj.*¹ sense 2. 'Made dirty or foul: soiled'. Earliest quotation 1632. Cf.:

OED s.v.moil *v.* sense 1. a. '*trans.* (usu. in *pass.*). To wet, moisten; to soil, bedaub'. There are quotations for this verb from ?1425, the first citation being spelled *moll*ed (rather than *moil*- or *moyl*-). The words 'mole(d)' and 'moil(ed)', in the senses given, clearly have the same ultimate etymology (cf. the OED entries), but 'moiled' fits the required meaning in MS B better than 'moled'.

?Unrecorded meaning.

22. *For the strange drayn~*

MS B does not define 'the strong drain', but given the ingredients of the recipe, it is obviously a powerful lubricating laxative. You begin with a gallon of milk, boiled down to a *potell*, or half a gallon. Because the adult horse is lactose intolerant, this would be a good start. You then grind up twelve heads of garlic, three ounces of bayberries, and a handful each of hyssop and red fennel, and boil these in the milk until soft. Then you let it cool, *and fastying pore this medicyne in his mouthe wyth a horn.*

Garlic and hyssop are both purgative, and along with the milk might well have a dramatic effect. Red fennel and bayberry are no doubt added for their carminative and soothing effects on the intestines, to alleviate the inevitable side effects of the laxative. The horse must then be kept warm and fasting for a day and then be given dry food and warm drink for four more days. Horses cannot vomit, and are therefore more susceptible to gut problems. They can die from impaction of the pelvic flexure, so this was probably an important recipe. Nowadays liquid paraffin would be administered as a lubricant not absorbable by the gut. The 15th-century milk-based drench would have been a reasonable equivalent.

Neither MED s.v. drein(e (n.) nor OED s.v. drain, *n.* record the meaning laxative.

Unrecorded meaning

23. *For a Corbe* (MS C: *coorbe*; W: *curbe*)

The text describes this as being on the knee joint of the hind leg (i.e. the hock) and that it makes the horse crooked and lame. The cure is to hold a red-hot iron close to the sore until the sore is hot and then *vent* (MS C *avent*) it with a *fleme* (i.e. 'lancet') in seven places. Then a caustic plaster of salt, *verval* (MS C *nervalle*) and verdigris, bound with an egg white to flax is laid on the sore and it will be whole.

MED s.v. courbe (n.) sense (b) 'a hump', but not in the specialised sense needed.

OED s.v. courbe *n.* 2. 'A swelling on the back of a horse's hock: see curb *n.* sense II. 4. 'A hard swelling on the hock or other part of a horse's leg; the disease characterised by these'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

The curb is still the word used for this condition. Nowadays it is known that the cause is a sprain of the plantar ligament 'on the outside of and just below the point of the hock' (*HOVH* 2008: 257). The sprain leads to lameness and swelling, and chronic curb will show thickened and swollen scar tissue at the site of the problem. It is this scar tissue that our text's remedy is designed to scour away. Nowadays the main remedy is to rest the horse, and one can only suppose that for some of the medieval cures, the time taken to apply them, during which the horse was not being ridden, may well have had more efficacy than the supposed cure itself.

For *vent* and *avent* see:

MED s.v. *venten* (v.) ‘To provide (a wine cask) with an air hole’.
Quotation from a1398 and

MED s.v. *aventen* (v.) sense 2. (b) ‘to let blood from (a vein)’. Quotation
from a1500.

Antedating up to 50 years.

In OED these senses are not recorded under either *avent*, *vb.* or *vent*
*v*².

MS B’s *verval* is presumably a miswriting for *nerval*, perhaps influenced
by the word ‘*vervain*’, which also occurs in the recipes. Again the ingredient
is being used as a caustic or corrosive to get rid of scar tissue (cf. no. 17
above).

24. *For a Selaunder*

MS B describes this as being in the *crokyng*~ (i.e. ‘bending’) of the hind
leg⁴¹ and being like scabbed *strykkes* (i.e. ‘streaks’) that will fret the sinews
in two and lame the horse if untreated. The remedy is a plaster of the
caustics black soap and verdigris with the *mylke* (i.e. ‘milt’) of a raw herring
(MS C *milte rowe off a barrell beryng*~). In three days he shall be whole.

The combination of the corrosives black soap and verdigris with
herring milt is interesting. Herring milt contains proteins, which (after
the scabs had been scoured off) might have prevented further erosion of
the damaged tissue. There is no obvious candidate among modern day
horse complaints to match this condition.

Not in MED.

OED s.v. *sallender*, *n.* ‘A dry scab affecting the hock of horses. Earliest
quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

For herring *mylke* and *milte* see:

MED s.v. *milk* (n.) sense 3. ‘The milt of fish or of frogs’. Quotations
from a1398 onwards.

MED s.v. *milt*(e (n.) sense (b) ‘?= milk 3’.

OED s.v. *milk* *n.*¹ and *adj.* sense 4.a. ‘The milt of a fish’. Quotations
from a1398 onwards.

⁴¹ Both MS B and MS C have ‘hoof’ here, which must be an error. MS C’s text also has
grouyng~ (i.e. ‘growing’) *off the hove*, which shows further corruption.

OED s.v. milt *n.*¹ 'The semen or the testes of a male fish'. Quotations from 11483 onwards.

MS C's *milte rowe* is odd, since it seems to be a contradiction; the roe is the female eggs, the milt is the male reproductive cells and organs.

MS C's collocation *barell beryng* is not cited, as far as I can see, in the entries for either 'herring' or 'barrel' in MED or in OED. Herring were of course stored in barrels and 'herring-barrel' is a commonly used compound from the 15th century onwards. A 'barrel-herring' is presumably a salted herring as opposed to a fresh one.

New compound.

25. *For* ['a hurt': omitted] *in the stefulle*

MS B says that this comes about from hasty steering or a sliding of the hindquarters and it *sprnyges the joynt* (read *sprynges*; MS C: *spryngith*; W *spryngyng of*). The remedy is three weeks' rest. Then you have to make a small incision in the stifle joint and blow the skin away from the flesh with a quill and *bruse* it out again and clean it with urine. Then a soothing ointment containing mallow, honey and oil of bay is applied. And do not steer him hastily, and he shall be whole. Stifle injuries are not common and it is possible that trauma lower in the leg could cause a lame horse to move in a way that looked as if the source of the problem was higher up the leg.

MED s.v. stifle (*n.* (1)) '*Anat.* The joint between the femur and the tibia of a quadruped.' Quotations from 1330 onwards.

OED s.v. stifle *n.*¹ sense 1. 'The joint at the junction of the hind leg and the body (between the femur and the tibia) in a horse or other quadruped: corresponding anatomically to the knee in man.' Quotations from 1330 onwards.

The collocation 'springs the joint' or 'springing of the joint' seems not to be recorded in either MED or OED; though cf.:

MED s.v. springen (*v.*) sense 5 (c) (but used intransitively): *Senwe sprungen fro ðe lið*; and:

OED s.v. spring *v.*¹ under II. *Transitive senses.* 22. c., which shows similar usage with inanimate mechanisms but with quotations only from 1828 onwards.

Unrecorded meaning.

26. *For the hewe in the Eye* (MS C: *hawe*; W: *hawyn*)

MS B describes this as a *flume* (MS C: *Fleme*) in front of the sight of the eye that will grow into a horn and then fret out the eye. The remedy is to remove it surgically with a needle and thread by putting the needle under the haw, drawing it up with the thread and cutting it off with a sharp knife. The eye is then soothed and lubricated by the application of ale (MS C *spoute his Eye full of ale*) and that is all there is to it (*do no more per-too*).

MED s.v. *haue* (n.(3)) 'A morbid growth in the eye'. Quotations from a1425 onwards.

OED s.v. *haw* *n.*³ sense a. 'The nictitating membrane or 'third eyelid' of a horse, dog, etc. being a triangular cartilage lying just within the inner corner of the eye, which is capable of expansion, so as to sweep dust, etc. from the eyeball.' The definition goes on: 'The haw is liable to inflammation and temporary enlargement, and it was to this affected form, which the old farriers considered an 'excrescence', that they usually applied the name'.

This assessment in OED seems to suggest that treated horses might have been disfigured unnecessarily. However, many growths do affect horses' eyes and some do cause genuine problems as *HOVH* (2008: 150–151) makes clear:

Benign and malignant tumours occur on the eyelids and on the nictitating membrane. Squamous cell carcinoma [...] grow[s] slowly and invade[s] the eye [...] Sarcoids [...] are caused by a virus. These tumours either grow internally and invade the eye, or externally and break through the skin. They are difficult to treat and tend to recur after removal. Other tumours occasionally seen are skin papillomas, melanomas, and lymphosarcomas. [...] All growths of the eyelids should be removed at an early stage.

So perhaps the author of our text did know a thing or two about the treatment of horses' eye complaints, of which more follow below. The modern treatment for squamous cell carcinoma would be very similar to that in MS B. The tumour would have to be pulled firmly outwards from the eye with forceps before it could be snipped off. Drawing it out with a thread would work in the same way.

The word *flume* (variant *fleme*) with the meaning ‘film over the eye’ is not recorded in either MED s.v. *flem*(e (n.(2))) or *flum* (n.) or OED s.v. *fleam* n.² or *flume* n.

Unrecorded meaning.

For MS C’s *spoute*, see:

OED s.v. *spout* v. sense 5 ‘To wet or drench by a stream of liquid’.
Earliest quotation 1575.

Antedating: 100 years.

27. *For the warte in the eye* (MS C: *wrot*; W: *werte*)

MS B says that it comes from the horse being kept in a dark stable which causes a *flume* (MS C: *fleme*) like a cord (MS C: *lyke a creme off Rose water*) to congeal over the eye.⁴² MS C goes on to say that then the eyes become small and wasted and some men call it *pore-blynd* [i.e. ‘purblind’]. The remedy is ground burnt alum, mixed either with unburnt soap (MS B) or white copperas (protosulphate of zinc: MS C and W) and blown into the eye with a quill. And don’t keep him in a dark stable any more and he shall be whole. Of all the various eye conditions that horses are subject to, uveitis (sometimes called cloudy eye or moon blindness), best fits MS B’s description here. Repeated attacks of uveitis can cause the eye to become ‘small and wasted’.

MED s.v. *wart* (n.) sense (b) ‘a cyst of the eyelid’. Quotation from ?C1425.

OED s.v. *wart* n. sense 1a. Earliest quotation, with reference to wart in the eye, 1614.

The creamy film coming over the horse’s eye may this time refer to a protruding nictitating membrane (*HOVH* 2008: 145)

28. *For the perle in the Eye*

The text says that it comes from the stroke of a rod or a whip in the horse’s eye and it grows like a pearl. The remedy is a liquid medicine made from a mixture of ground ivy, celandine and woman’s milk, blown with a quill into the eye at night for three nights. The horse should be kept with

⁴² MS B seems to have missed a line out here since it has rose water as part of the remedy rather than the description, and has no reference to the term ‘purblind’. MS C and W agree on the word *creme* and on *pore-blynd*.

little light for three days and he shall be whole. This condition is clearly a corneal ulcer, which results in a discrete spot of opacity in the eye.

MED s.v. *perl(e (n.(2)))* sense 3. (c) ‘a disease of the eye causing a film, spot, or tumor on the eyeball; ?a cataract’. Quotations from a1382 onwards.

OED s.v. *pearl n.¹* sense A. I. 1. b. ‘Any white lesion of the eye, *esp.* a corneal opacity or a cataract’. The single quotation that has reference specifically to a horse is from 1614.

[MS C’s text ends here.]

29. *For the kankere in the Eye*

This is a strange description. MS B says that it comes from bad (*wykkyd*: *W wylde*) blood in the head that falls down into the eye where it congeals and forms a worm, like the head of an ant (*pismire*). (*W* simply says that it *wexeth quyke*). It grows from the back end of the eye *to the noseward~* and it goes into the nostril. If it goes through the gristle it will go into the head and the horse will die. The remedy is burnt alum, green copperas (protosulphate of iron) ground to powder and mixed with honey and applied to the sore eye and he shall be whole.

The word *kanker* in Middle English normally refers to a chronic non-healing sore or ulcer. It is evident that the author of the text believes this condition to be caused by a live parasite. But the description of wicked blood falling into the eye would rather suggest conjunctivitis (also called red eye), which makes the eyes bloodshot. If conjunctivitis is infected with bacteria it becomes purulent, with a sticky mucous discharge that falls down over the eye towards the nose. Such a condition, left untreated, could probably have invaded the whole system and have killed a horse in the days before antibiotics.

MS B’s *to the noseward~* has not been recorded in the dictionaries. Cf., however:

OED s.v. *nosewards adv.* ‘Towards the nose’. Earliest quotation 1869.

Antedating: 400 years.

30. *For the Eggis in the Cheke* [*W: For the gygges in the cheke*]

In spite of the different names employed, both MS B and *W* describe the same condition. It is in the horse’s mouth next to the ‘great tooth’ and it is as big as a walnut and prevents him from eating, because the hay falls

between his teeth. The remedy is to take his tongue out to one side and slit the place with a lancet the length of a date and then take out things like white corn seeds. Make sure they are all out cleanly. Then from egg yolk tempered with salt, make a mixture that is as hard as linden (wood) (W: 'leaven'). From this make two balls and put them in each cheek, and that will make him whole. This description almost certainly refers to a dental abscess as a result of a tooth root infection. The hay falling between the teeth indicates the packing of food on the outside of the teeth in the periodontal pockets, which is a common symptom of such conditions.

MS B's *Eggis* is a unique reading for this condition for which W's *gygges* is the more usual term.

No transferred meanings for 'egg' given in MED.

OED s.v. *egg* *n.* sense 3. a. 'Applied to anything that resembles an egg in shape or appearance'. There are no citations in this transferred use before 1589 and no specific reference to a horse disease. It is therefore not certain that the name of the disease in MS B does represent a form of the word 'egg', or is a variant of the word 'giggs', see below, whose origin is itself obscure. The condition (given the description) is perhaps some sort of granuloma.

New meaning.

For W's *gygges*, see:

OED s.v. † *giggs* | *gigs*, *n.* 'A mouth disease in horses'. Origin obscure. Earliest quotation 1566.

Antedating 50+ years.

31. *For the lampas*

MS B describes this as a *malaunder* (see above no. 11) that is like an almond in a place *a-fore his mouthe evyn~ be-fore the tethe*. W says it is in the horse's palate by the forehead. Both texts agree that it prevents the horse from eating, but MS B especially is somewhat astray with the description. Lampas is the word still in use (HOVH (2008: 179) to describe a hard palate swelling behind the upper front teeth, which normally disappears spontaneously. MS B's remedy is to take a lancet and let blood on either side, a little interior to (*with-yn~*) the lampas, but not making the incision more than the length of a barley-corn. Then you heat an iron rod and flatten it to a knife-edge and turn it *lyke a crochet* [i.e. 'hook'] (W *make it*

croked). Then you heat it till it is red hot and put it under the *lampas* (W says & drawe it out). After the operation, you anoint the place with fresh butter and thus make him whole. The term *lampas* is still used today broadly for any swelling in any part of a horse's mouth. It now describes periodontal disease in association with proliferative swellings and non-cancerous growths. 'Lampas' would nowadays also encompass *barbelis* (no. 32 below).

Not in MED. OED s.v. *lampas* *n.*¹ 'A disease incident to horses, consisting in a swelling of the fleshy lining of the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

32. *For the barbelis* (W: *barbyllys*)

MS B says that it is a malady that grows under the tongue like *pappis* [i.e. 'teats'] and long, narrow *ferette*. The remedy is to *crippe* them with a pair of shears as close to the roots as possible. Then let him drink and he shall be whole. Nowadays this condition would be subsumed under the term 'lampas' (no. 31 above).

Not recorded in this sense in MED nor in OED. Barbel is, however, a type of fish, and by transferred usage can mean a mouth appendage in fish:

OED s.v. *barbel* *n.* sense 2. 'A fleshy filament hanging from the corners of the mouth of some fishes, e.g. of the barbel'. Earliest quotation 1601. Cf., however:

OED s.v. *barb* *n.*¹ sense 4. '*Veterinary Med.* in *pl.* Folds of the mucous membrane under the tongue of horses and cattle, protecting the orifices of the ducts of the submaxillary glands; the disease caused by their inflammation'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

This definition needs also to be applied to the word 'barbel'.

New meaning.

MS B's *ferrete* is not recorded in this sense in MED, but see:

OED s.v. *ferret* *n.*¹ sense 2. 'A stout tape most commonly made of cotton, but also of silk'. Earliest quotation is 1649. The word is thought to be a development of Italian *fioretto* or of French *fleuret* 'little flower'. MS B's word (which has no equivalent in W) obviously refers to excrescences that are long, narrow and tape-like, which would fit the sense.

Antedating: 200 years.

MS B's *crippe* in context clearly means 'shear or cut off, crop'. It appears not to be recorded in this sense in either MED or OED but cf:

MED s.v. *cripped* (ppl.) 'Of testicles: bruised, crippled'. Quotation from a1425 (a1382).

OED s.v. *crippid* *adj.* 'Perh. variant of *crimped* *adj.* = squeezed, bruised'. OED has the same quotation as in MED from the Wycliffite Bible in which the phrase *crippid or kitt* occurs. I suggest that (given MS B's evidence) the meaning here should not be 'bruised or cut' but 'cropped or cut', and that the verb 'crip' meaning 'shear off, crop' should be added to the record.

Unrecorded word and meaning.

33. *For the lamory* [W: *For the camery*]

MS B says that this is a sickness that comes from eating food that has been fouled by cats and worms. It makes the horse's tongue look white and his mouth *claymy* [i.e. 'clammy, sticky, viscous'] (W: *glaymi* [i.e. 'gleimy, sticky, slimy']]), and he will not eat. The remedy is to let blood in the two great veins under the tongue to the depth of a barley corn and wash his mouth with vinegar and salt and give him new bread that is not hot and he will be whole.

MS B's *lamory* is not recorded in either MED or OED. The condition would seem to be some sort of a yeast or fungal infection (or perhaps horse saliva syndrome) resulting in viscosity in the mouth. Whatever the condition, the symptoms described are not commonly seen nowadays (Malcolm Morley pers. comm.), so the condition remains a mystery.

New word and meaning.

One possible source for the term *lamory*, which I tentatively offer here, is the word 'amber' or 'lamber' (< OF *lambre*). The entry in OED s.v. *amber*, *n.*¹ and *adj.* makes it clear that the word only later became associated with the hard yellow resin (*ambre jaune*), but in the 14th and 15th century it meant 'ambergris' (*ambre gris*) which OED defines as: 'A wax-like substance of marbled ashy colour, found floating in tropical seas, and as a morbid secretion in the intestines of the sperm-whale. It is odoriferous and used in perfumery; formerly in cookery'. In Middle English the word 'amber' with the 'ambergris' meaning is recorded with spellings *lamber*, *lambre* and *lammer*. With the 'yellow amber' meaning it is recorded also with spellings: *lamar*, *lamer*, *lamour* (see OED s.v.

lamber, *n.*¹). As it ages, ambergris gets darker and more solid in texture and the smell improves. But it starts off pale white in colour, and is soft with a strong faecal smell. This could plausibly be a substance comparable to the clammy, white viscosity in the horse's mouth that in MS B is given the name *lamory* (i.e. 'like lamor').

For W's *camery*, see:

OED s.v. *camery n.* 'A disease of horses characterized by small pustules in the middle of the palate, perh. lampas or glanders'. Earliest quotation 1587.

Antedating: 80+ years.

However, in W the disease does not seem to be the same as that defined by OED and it cannot be either lampas or glanders, which are both dealt with as different diseases in our text. *Camery* was perhaps adopted in W because *lamory* was not known or understood.

34. *For the cordis* (W: *cordys*)

The description of this condition is very confusing. MS B (and W is similar) says that it is *a streynynge þæt bredyð amonge the senuys* [i.e. 'sinews, tendons']. I conjecture that it is some sort of systemic infection of the tendons that cause them to look like cords under the skin. The description seems to track a particular tendon or (presumably) series of tendons. It starts with the one end that comes down to the *sakell veyn*~ (W: *shakil veyne*) and then goes up the length of the leg on the inner side, and so under the shoulder and along the neck by the throat. Then it goes over the temple, under the ear and under the eye, and down over the snout between the nostrils, and ends between the *grestill* [i.e. 'gristle'] and the lip. The gristle presumably refers to the cartilaginous part of the nose. The remedy is to make an incision the length of an almond. MS B's version says *þer-fore kytte*, but without saying where to cut. But W's version says *There kyt*. The implication is that the cut is made at the place where the description has arrived: that is, at the nose end. You then take the curved tine of a hart's antler and put it under the *cord*. Presumably the cord here refers not to the disease or complaint, but to the sinew itself. You wind it ten or twelve times, so tight that the horse is forced to lift up his foot from the ground. Then you have to cut the cord in two under the *payn*~ [i.e. 'sore place?'] and put a little salt into the incision and he shall be whole.

It is very difficult to understand the rationale of this description and remedy. Nothing like it is commonly observed today, and the remedy certainly makes no anatomical sense at all. MED does not record the word ‘cords’ for an ailment. OED does include it:

OED s.v. cord *n.*¹ sense 6. ‘*Farriery*. (Usually *pl.*) A disease affecting the sinews of a horse; string-halt.?[?] *Obs.*’. The earliest quotation is ?1523. A quotation from 1616 retains a description of the remedy very similar to that in MS B. A further quotation from 1702 (perhaps an advertisement for the sale of a horse) is as follows: ‘*London Gaz.* No. 3855/4, A brown-bay Horse .. two small Knots on his Nose which was cut for the cords’. This would suggest that the incision noted in our text was indeed to be made at the nose end of the length of sinew(s) described. Whatever the condition, MS B provides an antedating for the term ‘the cords’.

Antedating: 50+ years.

MS B’s *sakell veyn*~ is not recorded in MED or OED. Nor is W’s *shakil veyne*. MS B’s *sakell* is possibly another variant of the word ‘shackle’. If so, the vein referred to may perhaps be that associated with the shackle-bone or wrist-bone.

OED s.v. shackle-bone, *n.* sense 1. The wrist. Earliest quotation from 1571. In none of the citations, however, is the word used for the bone of a horse’s lower leg. This would have to be the bone our text’s ‘shackle vein’ is associated with, at the point where a shackle or hobble would be tied.

New compound of uncertain meaning.

35. *For the vivis* (W: *vyues*)

MS B says that you can recognise them if you take up the skin between the jaw and the neck and if you feel something hard like a kernel and, if they are ripe, the size of an egg but *qweke* [i.e. ‘alive’]. The remedy is to take the horse’s ear and lay it between the jaw and the neck. Measuring by it, at the point where its length ends on the neck, make an incision the length of an almond. Then you pick out the *vivis* with the tine of a hart’s antler. After three nights it will *mater* [i.e. ‘give out pus’]. You then wash it out with tanner’s water and sage juice and put on a small amount of ointment made from honey, butter and tar and in five days he shall be whole. This condition clearly refers to swollen maxillary lymph nodes (see the definition in OED below). The description of the incision site at

the end of the folding down of the ear would be exactly right for the seat of such a problem.

Not recorded in MED.

OED s.v. *vives*, *n.* 'With *pl.* and *sg.* concord. Hard swellings of the submaxillary glands of a horse; the presence of these regarded as a specific morbid condition in a horse'. Earliest quotation ?1523.

Antedating: 50+ years.

It is interesting that in MS B and in W the text refers to the *vives* as a living parasite. In MS B on fol. 55v there is another remedy for the same condition, written in a later hand, which is said to *kille* the *vives*.

For the verb *mater* in MS B, see above under no. 16.

36. *For a kanker in the wederssond~* [W: *For the canker in y^e wethersesaunt*] MS B says that this is *wronge by-fore the sadell* [i.e. 'injured or wrung in the withers'] and this creates a *kankyr* [i.e. 'ulcer']. The remedy is to take a razor and cut away the dead flesh till you come to the *quyke* or unaffected flesh. Then you wipe the sore with hay soaked in a mixture of stale urine boiled with salt. Then you dress the wound with a plaster of egg yolk, verdigris and flour three times and he shall be whole.

The *wederssond~* must be the withers if it is *by-fore the sadell* but this spelling is unrecorded. This particular condition is usually caused by an ill-fitting saddle and is still common. It is usually referred to now as 'fistulous withers'.

Not attested in MED.

OED s.v. *withers* *n.* sense a. 'In *pl.* with *pl.* concord. In a horse: the highest part of the back, lying between the shoulder-blades'. Earliest quotation 1541–2. This quotation has the spelling 'wydersomes' and the next (from 1547) has 'wyder sone'. For neither of these spellings is the origin of the second element explained.

New spelling and antedating: 75+ years.

For MS B's *wronge* see:

OED s.v. *wring* *v.* sense 5. b. 'To affect (a person, etc.) with bodily pain, hurt, or damage (sometimes *spec.* by torsion or pressure); to hurt, harm, or injure'. See also the use of the verb 'wring' in quotations in OED under 'withers' where also cf. the compound 'witherwring'. Earliest quotation in this usage 1580.

Antedating: 120+ years.

37. *For the mornynge~ of the chyne*

The description of this complaint in MS B is very full. It is caused by cold after over-heating and it starts in the veins of the horse's back and spreads (*bredys*) into the veins of the neck and head. Then it causes the flesh along the *chine* [i.e. 'spine'] to rot and to *drawe matyr* [i.e. 'produce pus']. This then spreads along the spine and *maters* out at the nostrils. The remedy is also detailed. You must tie the horse's legs together and throw him down onto a bale of straw. Then you grind together a halfpenny worth of 'long' pepper, a farthing worth of brimstone, a pennyworth of galingale (i.e. ginger), twopence worth each of spikenard of Spain and of saffron, and two ounces of clarified butter, and boil this with a quart of good ale. Cool it till it is milk-warm and then bring his head to be upright and with a horn pour half the mixture into one nostril and half into the other. Hold his nostrils up with your hand and close them off to keep the breath in until his eyes pop out of his head. Then he will sweat and you can let him breathe. Then, while he is still lying down but with his head upright, give him to drink a quart of ale with a quarter of ground bayberries in it. Then you can let him stand and keep him in a warm stable with litter around him and cloths on him. Keep him like this for two hours without food and drink while the medicine works. The next food he has must be *draff* [i.e. malt waste] with plenty of salt in it. After that give him hot water with malt for three days. Thereafter he may have oats baked in the oven with new bran after his water for three more days. Thereafter you can give him what you will, and he will be whole. No condition like this is seen nowadays. Discharge from the nostrils would normally be associated with sinusitis, but the *mornynge~ of the chyne* seems to indicate something more systemic and serious. It is possible that it represents a late phase of farcy or glanders.

Not recorded in MED.

OED s.v. mourning *n.*² '*Veterinary Med.* Now *hist.* mourning of (also on) the chine *n.* an equine disease characterized by chronic nasal discharge'. Earliest quotation ?1523. OED points out that quotations from the 1607 and 1681 make it clear that the discharge was thought to arise from the spinal marrow or brain. Cf. also OED chine *n.*² sense 5.

Antedating: 50+ years.

MS B's text ends here on fol. 55v. Other, later hands add further remedies for the *Ewlewis* [i.e. 'yellows, jaundice'], the glanders (two recipes), the *wyuyys* [i.e. 'vives'], the pains and to break a *boche* [i.e. 'botch, tumour'] within six *yorsse* [i.e. 'hours']. After that MS B continues with JW's copy of the *Ordinance of Pottage*. W's text continues with another sixteen horse diseases, three of which have already been covered in MS B but the other thirteen of which do not feature in MS B.

5 CONCLUSIONS

John Whittokesmede was an influential and hard-working professional lawyer and parliamentarian during a sixty-year career in the 15th century. He was almost certainly the main influence behind the compilation of Yale University Library, Beinecke MS 163. Given the *Whittokesmede* 'signatures' on fols. 14v, 59r and 101v it seems likely also that JW himself was the main scribe of the manuscript. If so, his work indicates personal interest not only in parliamentary texts that would have formed part of his professional library, but also in a wide range of material both intellectual and practical. The practical texts (recipes, herbals, texts on hunting and hawking as well as our horse medicine text) are such that would have pertained to the life of a country gentlemen, and probably one with a considerable staff and stables to support. If he had social pretensions, as Keiser (1999: 474) suggests, it seems they were to a great extent successfully realised.

This paper shows how work in one field of endeavour—Middle English dialectology—can lead to discoveries in, and connections among, a wide range of related fields: palaeography, lexicography and the history of the book, as well as social, cultural and parliamentary history. In the case of MS B it has also included insights into the history of farriery and veterinary medicine, and into the life and conditions of the medieval horse.

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**Appendix 1: Timeline of the life and career of John Whittokesmede
III (c.1405–1482/83)**

Sources: Driver (1999); Wedgewood & Holt (1936); Laundy (1964); BHOPR.

Regnal years: Henry IV 1399–1413; Henry V 1413–22; Henry VI 1422–61, 1470–1471; Edward IV 1461–1470, 1471–1483

c.1405	born
1427 (Sep 1)	elected MP for Bath (Parliament 13 Oct 1427 to 25 Mar 1428)
1427–	Attorney in the Courts of the King's Bench and Common Pleas (Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire)
1429 (Aug 29)	elected MP for Bath (Parliament 22 Sep 1429 to 23 Feb 1430)
1431	feoffee for lands in Bristol
1432 (Apr 7)	elected MP for Bath (Parliament 12 May 1432 to 17 Jul 1432)
1433	elected MP for Devizes (Parliament 8 Jul 1433 to 21 Dec 1433)
1435 (Oct 6)	party to a fine in the Court of Common Pleas gaining (with others) rights to the manor of Whiteoxmead, Somerset and other lands
1436 (May)	granted an Exchequer lease of the manor of West Chelworth, Somerset
1437 (Jan)	elector for Bath
1437	co-feoffee with John Fortescue (later to become a knight and Chief Justice) and Richard Choke (later to become a knight and a judge) in fines concerning land in Somerset
1438 (Apr 27)	co-feoffee with John Fortescue for Sir Walter Hungerford as plaintiffs in a fine. (Hungerford held Wellow, Somerset, adjacent to Whiteoxmead)
1439	co-feoffee with John Fortescue and Richard Choke in fines concerning land in Somerset
1441–2	Employed as lawyer in Wilton
1441 (Dec 19)	elector for Wiltshire

- 1441 (Dec 19) **elected MP for Downton (Parliament 25 Jan 1442 to 27 May 1442)**
- 1444 (Jan 13) co-feoffee with William Hoggekyns (mayor of Bath) for Walter Rich
- 1446 feoffee for Nicholas Cricklade for lands in Wiltshire
- 1447 (Jan) feoffee for Sir Walter (Lord) Hungerford for property and land in Chippenham
- 1447 (Feb 14) feoffee for Walter Rich's widow
- 1447 co-trustee with William Hoggekyns for properties in Bath
- ca. 1448 appointed bailiff for the Bishop of Salisbury (held position till at least 1465)
- 1448 appointed to a panel to investigate a case of piracy
- 1448 named a Serjeant-at-arms (not in Driver (1999); see Wedgewood & Holt (1936: 945))**
- 1449 nominated to a commission to raise a government loan in Wiltshire
- 1449 elected MP for Salisbury, first 1449 parliament (Parliament 12 Feb 1449 to 16 Jul 1449)**
- 1449 (Oct) acquired with John Coventry of Devizes the manor of Lydiard Tregoze
- 1449 elected MP for Bath, second 1449 parliament (Parliament 6 Nov 1449 to Jun 1450)**
- 1450 (May) commissioned a Justice of the Peace in Wiltshire (though probably already acting as a justice from 1447). Served continuously till 1482 (except between 3 Feb 1457 and 28 Jan 1458 and between 20 June 1471 and 4 Apr 1472)
- 1450 (Sep 20 & Oct 10) twice nominated as justice of oyer and teminer in Wiltshire
- 1450 (Oct 15) elected parliamentary knight of the shire for Wiltshire (Parliament 6 Nov 1450 to 24/31 May 1451)**
- 1451 (Jun 26) appointed joint farmer of the subsidy and ulnage of cloth for sale in Salisbury and Wiltshire
- 1451 nominated commissioner of gaol delivery of Old Sarum prison
- 1451 (Nov) to 1452 (Nov) escheator in Hampshire and Wiltshire

1452	renominated commissioner of gaol delivery of Old Sarum prison
1453 (Jun)	reappointed joint farmer of the subsidy and ulnage of cloth for sale in Salisbury and Wiltshire
1454 (May)	reappointed joint farmer of the subsidy and ulnage of cloth for sale in Salisbury and Wiltshire
1455	executor to the will of Reginald, Lord De la Warr
1455 (Jun 17)	elected MP for Calne (Parliament 9 July 1455 to Jan 1456 - interesting because first Yorkist parliament, Henry VI having been taken into custody)
1456–7	witness to a certificate from the rolls on the Court of Piepowder (borough tribunal attached to a fair or market)
1457 (Feb 9)	feoffee for Richard Choke in the manor of Stanton Drew, Somerset
1457 (Oct)	steward of the abbot of Hyde in his manor of Chisledon
1457	commissioner of array in Wiltshire
1458	commissioner of array in Wiltshire
1458 (Jan)	pardoned (because a Lancastrian) as ‘of Beanacre, Wiltshire, late escheator of Hampshire and Wiltshire, alias Justice of the Peace in Wiltshire, alias bailiff of the Liberties of the Bishop of Sarum’
1458 (Apr)	witness with Richard Choke in a quitclaim of the manor and advowson of Elm, Somerset
1458 (Dec)	with John Coventry of Devizes, licensed to grant the manor of Lydiard Tregoy to William, Bishop of Ely, John Seymour and William Alington (Cambs – speaker of the House of Commons 1472–75)
1459	commissioner of array in Wiltshire
1459 (Jun 26)	co-feoffee of Richard West, Lord De La Warr, granting Shepton Mallet to Richard Choke (serjeant-at-law)
1459	justice of oyer and terminer
?	1459 (Nov 20–Dec 20) Coventry parliament (Lancastrian power base). Returns for Devizes and Bath missing
?	1460 (Oct 7)–1461 (Feb 3). All parliamentary returns lost
1461	(Mar 8) acted for the Rich family in a property transaction

- 1461 (May 27) (Edward IV now on throne) commission to enquire into dilapidations in the royal castle and manor of Devizes, the lordship of Rowde and the forests of Chippenham, Melksham and Pewsey
- 1461 (Jul 24) commissioner in Wiltshire to raise money for defence against the French
- 1461 (Aug 12) commissioner of array
- 1462 (Jan) co-feoffee with Henry Long for Thomas Tropenell of Great Chalfield
- 1462 (Jan 27) obtained an Exchequer lease of the manor of Upavon
- 1462 (Feb 10) surety for an Exchequer lessee
- 1462 (Feb) justice of oyer and terminer
- 1463 (Apr 13) elected MP for Wilton (Parliament 29 Apr 1463 to 28 Mar 1465)**
- 1465 appointed to report on lands held by the attainted Lancastrian James Butler, Earl of Wiltshire, in Somerset and Dorset
- 1467 elected MP for Wilton**
- 1468 reappointed to report on lands held by the attainted Lancastrian James Butler, Earl of Wiltshire, in Somerset and Dorset
- 1469 (Mar) co-witness with Henry Long for property transaction
- 1469 feoffee in the manors of Coombe Bissett and Ugford St James
- 1470 (Jun 5) appointed with Henry Long, Philip Morgan and others to enquire into a complaint by John Kevell of Barford
- ?1470 (26 Nov)–1471 (Apr) Parliament Roll lost. Speaker not known**
- 1471 (Jun 30) temporarily lost his place on Wiltshire bench of justices
- 1471 (Nov) co-feoffee for William, Lord Hastings (a prominent Yorkist) and Thomas Vaughan
- 1472 feoffee in the manor of North Perrott, Somerset
- 1472 (Feb 12) member of a panel with Philip Morgan to deal with trespass and riots in Wiltshire
- 1472 restored to the Wiltshire bench as Justice of the Peace
- 1472 (May 5) elected MP for Cricklade (Parliament 6 Oct 1472 to 14 Mar 1475). JW's associate William Alington was Speaker**

- 1473 feoffee in the manors of Coombe Bissett and Ugford St James
- 1473 (Apr 1) reappointed Justice of the Peace
- 1473 (Apr) prosecutor by attorney in the King's Bench
- 1474 (Jun 30) investigation into cases of felony and concealment of illegal goods
- 1475 (Dec 7) member of a panel to deal with treasons and Lollardy in Dorset and Wiltshire
- 1482 at Michaelmas, name appears as one of burgesses of Wilton, but crossed out and annotated *mort est*. Not included among Justices of Peace in July 1483. Therefore must have died between Sept 1482 and July 1483.

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